

Water Ways

Still Creek/Brunette River Watershed

Spring/Summer 2001
Information Sheet #1

Theme: Stormwater Management at a Watershed Scale

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Brunette Basin Coordinating Committee Members:
 City of Burnaby
 City of Coquitlam
 City of New Westminister
 City of Vancouver
 Greater Vancouver Regional District
 Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks
 Fisheries and Oceans Canada
 British Columbia Institute of Technology
 University of British Columbia
 Simon Fraser University
 Members of Public

This is the first in a series of educational information sheets on the Brunette Basin. The primary distribution will be via the Internet, with some hard copies available for community events. Brunette Basin residents are the intended audience. The goal is to provide an overview of some of the issues facing the Basin and present some of the ongoing initiatives and potential solutions used to address these issues. Residents are encouraged to provide feedback on how to improve future information sheets.

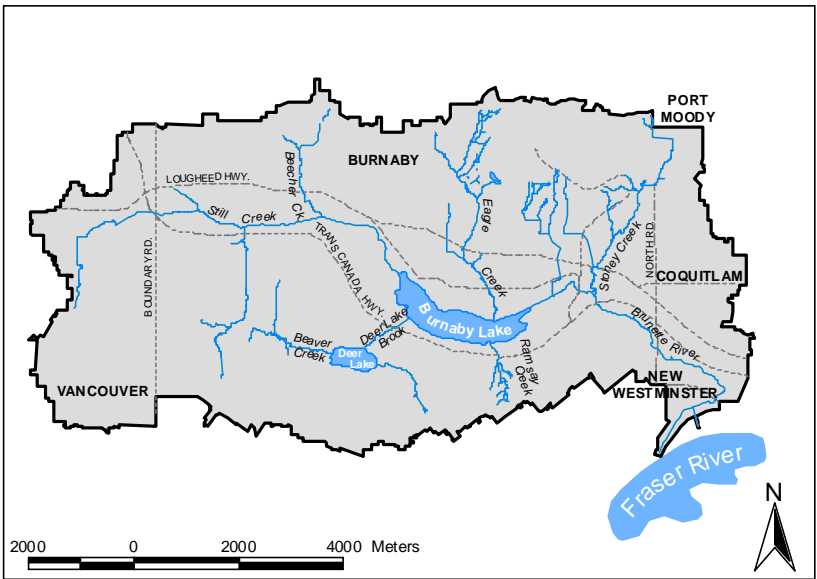
Brunette Basin Overview

The Still Creek/Brunette River Watershed, also known as the

the diagram, 75% of the watershed is in Burnaby, 20% in Vancouver, 7% in Coquitlam, 2% in New Westminister, and 1% in Port Moody.

Still Creek and the Brunette River—the main channels of the watershed—flow for approximately 17 km through this densely populated region to the Fraser River in New Westminister. Although the Basin houses over 175,000 residents, an amazing 20% of the watershed remains as green space. Numerous tributaries and lakes contribute over 200 km of open water to the system, providing fish and wildlife habitat and offering potential to enhance both.

The watershed is home to many types of fish including: Coho, Chinook, and Chum salmon,



Brunette Basin is a highly urbanized area covering a portion of 5 Lower Mainland municipalities. As seen in

cutthroat and rainbow trout, steelhead, prickly sculpin, stickleback and many others. In

addition, the watershed supports over 200 other wildlife species including the endangered Snowshoe hare, Pacific water shrew and Western grebe. The watershed is part of the Pacific Flyway migratory bird route and is used as a viewing area for numerous waterfowl, shorebirds and passerine species.

Through its lakes and waterways, Greenways and numerous parks, the Brunette Basin also provides a unique urban opportunity for recreational pursuits.



Recognizing that all levels of government and stakeholders needed to work together to ensure the future health of the Basin and to help correct past mistakes, a multi-stakeholder task group was formed. The Brunette Basin Task Group came together in 1997 to develop a stormwater management strategy that would help establish a framework for future watershed development.

Planning at a Watershed Scale

In the past, many urban watersheds, including the Brunette Basin, were seen primarily as drainage networks. The philosophy of the day was to move the problem water out of the system as quickly as possible. Much

of the system was piped and paved to meet the needs of the newly expanding population. Little thought was given to the effects on fish and wildlife. More recently, the idea of treating the entire watershed as one entity has changed the traditional methods of planning and engineering. Today, watersheds are widely recognized as the fundamental management unit for the protection and use of water.

As a result of this new philosophy, a new coordination team—the Brunette Basin Task Group (BBTG)—was formed. The group, made up of members from all levels of government, educational institutions, and private citizens, came together in this pilot project in stormwater planning at a watershed scale. They spent almost three years developing the Brunette Basin Watershed Plan (BBWP). This consensus based document, produced with community involvement, provides an overall strategy for municipalities to follow when planning future developments and initiatives within the Basin. Through its goal, vision and guiding principles, the BBWP sets the stage for future planning and management initiatives at a watershed scale, regardless of political boundaries.

Brunette Basin Watershed Plan

The Brunette Basin Watershed Plan is the culmination of more than 3 years of effort by the multi stakeholder Brunette Basin Task Group. The plan, which was released in February 2001, offers a goal, vision and guiding principles to be followed when making future plans within the Basin. The BBWP has been endorsed by the 5 member

municipalities, and has been supported by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, and the Ministry of Environment, Land and Parks. The Plan was developed by the BBTG with public input at a series of evening workshops and open houses. The BBTG also developed a business outreach program and made presentations to a number of Rotary Clubs and other business groups. The BBWP is available from the GVRD Communications and Education Department and is posted on the Internet.

(www.gvrd.bc.ca/services/sewers/drain/drainage_home.html)

Goal, Vision, and Guiding Principles

Goal

To protect or enhance the integrity of the aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems and the human populations they support in a manner that accommodates growth and development.

Vision

The aquatic and terrestrial ecosystem is protected and enhanced while growth is accommodated in the watershed.

Guiding Principles

I. Impervious Area

The increase of impervious area should be minimized and stakeholder agencies should strive for long-term reduction of existing impervious area through Best Management Practices (BMPs).

II. Stream Corridor Protection

Stakeholder agencies should protect existing stream habitat and riparian areas and establish an effective buffer over the long-term.

Development within the watershed should employ stormwater Best Management Practices (BMPs) to reduce post development runoff and maintain and augment baseflows.

New in-stream structures should be designed to accommodate fish passage.

The stream corridors should be protected and managed with a balanced approach to stormwater conveyance, protection of life and property from flooding, aquatic habitat protection and recreational use.

The watershed strategies developed under the plan must be cost effective, affordable and reliable.

III. Integrated Approach

The strategic options should be integrated with land use planning, operations and maintenance, development programs, and other agency programs.

Stormwater management and stream enhancement activities within the watershed should be coordinated to provide continued and effective partnership and participation among all levels of government, regulatory agencies, businesses and the local community.

Integrated Stormwater Management Strategy for Stoney Creek Watershed

A detailed example of planning at a watershed scale was recently completed through the Integrated Stormwater Management Strategy for Stoney Creek. This plan, using the goal and guiding principles outlined in the Brunette Basin Watershed Plan, brought watershed stakeholders together to develop a stormwater management strategy for

the entire Stoney Creek watershed. Representatives from each municipality, senior government agencies, and stewardship groups participated in the strategy's development through a steering group and numerous public workshops.

The resulting strategy, which has been endorsed by each municipal council, provides a detailed look at stormwater management in the Stoney Creek sub-watershed. This plan received the Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of B.C. Environmental Award.

Brunette Basin Coordinating Committee

The BBCC is made up of stakeholders from the Brunette Basin. It has succeeded the Brunette Basin Task Group which disbanded after successfully developing the BBWP. The agencies and groups represented on the BBCC are listed on the front page of this info-sheet. Part of the committee's mandate is to provide coordination between groups and agencies that are performing work within the Basin and to

facilitate the implementation of the BBWP. The Committee meets on a regular basis to discuss common issues and to continue developing initiatives that provide a Basin wide benefit. Some current initiatives, including the production of this info-sheet, are listed in the Initiatives section.

Roles of Stakeholders in Basin

There are diverse stakeholder groups within the Basin. Some of their general functions are listed below.

Cities of Burnaby, Coquitlam, New Westminister, Port Moody, and Vancouver: stormwater and watershed management, approval of development plans, emergency spill response, education programs.

Greater Vancouver Regional District: convey flows in the main channels, the lower portions of Eagle, Stoney, and Chub creeks.

The Ministry of Environment, Lands, and Parks: issue water licences, applications for changes in water use or in-stream works, wildlife and habitat protection.

Fisheries and Oceans Canada: application of federal Fisheries Act, approval of in-stream works, Salmon enhancement programs; Salmonids in the Classroom Public Involvement Program and, support for Streamkeepers.

BCIT, SFU, & UBC mapping and water quality sampling, fish counts and other



community outreach.

Stewardship Groups: Sapperton Fish and Game Club, Stoney Creek Environment Committee, Beecher Creek Streamkeepers, Eagle Creek Streamkeepers—provide day to day stewardship of local creeks and pursue enhancement opportunities.

Initiatives and Future Events

The BBCC is currently facilitating the development of a GIS/web based database for the Brunette Basin. When complete, this project will provide an important resource management database and information tool to assist resource managers, community stewards, planners, enforcement/protection staff and others in the protection, enhancement and sustainability of salmon stocks and salmon habitat within the Brunette Basin. The website will also serve to provide Basin residents with detailed environmental information and other information concerning their specific neighbourhoods.

The BBCC is also facilitating the production and distribution of this bi-annual info-sheet. Each will focus on a different aspect of stormwater and watershed management.

Some other initiatives are as follows:

BCIT—Watershed Pledge Program, Burnaby Lake System Project.

City of Burnaby—developing a comprehensive standards manual for stormwater management.

City of Vancouver—conducting a Still Creek Corridor Study. Outcome to provide potential options for improvements along Still Creek—to be developed with input from public.

City of New Westminster—developing the Brunette Creek Neighbourhood plan which will present options for future improvements near the mouth of the Brunette River. Public and agency involvement is currently underway.

GVRD—“Enviroscape” stormwater and run-off demonstration models available for community events, groups, schools—contact Bruce Ford, GVRD C&E, 604-432-6203.



Events:

City of Burnaby—Environment Week—June 4-10, 2001—theme is Climate , Energy and Change, please contact City of Burnaby for more information.

GVRD—Burnaby Lake Park, canoe trips, nature walks, children’s activities—contact GVRD Parks for more information—432-6359

Other Reports

The following reports and guides are available on the GVRD website:

[Assessment of Current and Future GVS&DD Area Watershed and Catchment Conditions, Aug. 1999.](#)

[Stormwater Practices and Expenditures Survey, March 1998.](#)
[Best Management Practices Guide for Stormwater, Oct. 1999.](#)

[Options for Municipal Stormwater Management Governance, April 1998.](#)

[Climate Change and the Greater Vancouver Regional District](#)

Related Web-sites

BBCC members:

- www.city.burnaby.bc.ca
- www.city.coquitlam.bc.ca
- www.city.port-moody.bc.ca
- www.city.new-westminster.bc.ca
- www.city.vancouver.bc.ca
- www.gvrd.bc.ca
- www.gov.bc.ca/elp/
- www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/
- www.rem.sfu.ca
- www.bcit.ca
- www.ire.ubc.ca

Stewardship Links:

- www.bcfisheries.gov.bc.ca/fishhabitat/stewardship.html
- www.env.gov.bc.ca/sry/fwh/index.htm
- www.pyr.ec.gc.ca/GeorgiaBasin/gbieIndex.htm
- www.pyr.ec.gc.ca/ec/frap/fin.html
- www.fraserbasin.bc.ca/about.html
- www.stewardshipcentre.org
- www-heb.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/PSkF/home.htm

Contact Info

If you have any questions or comments for the Brunette Basin Coordinating Committee, or if you have an event you would like included in future issues please send an email to: BBCC@gvrd.bc.ca