



## Infrastructure Canada

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# Oak Bay to rehabilitate and transform section of Bowker Creek

*Gas Tax Fund used to improve innovative, outdoor learning space for students*

**Oak Bay, British Columbia, March 2, 2012** – A section of Bowker Creek bordering Oak Bay High School and the Oak Bay Recreation Centre will soon become an outdoor classroom and welcoming, urban green space, thanks to funding from Canada's Gas Tax Fund.

"Our government is proud to deliver long-term infrastructure funding for municipalities to support job creation, economic growth and positive environmental results," said the Honourable Alice Wong, Minister of State (Seniors). "Canada's Gas Tax Fund delivers stable, annual funding that provides communities with greater certainty and flexibility to choose their own local infrastructure priorities. I am pleased that the restoration of Bowker Creek will create local jobs, while providing Oak Bay residents with a natural greenway and an invaluable learning space for students."

This innovative project will transform a section of Bowker Creek from a degraded, highly urbanized creek into a naturally functioning water environment. As well, it will reduce flooding; improve the water quality and aquatic habitat; and provide an accessible, natural green space for students, families and residents alike.

"This is an excellent example of how collaboration between local governments, senior levels of government and the school district can produce such positive results for the entire community," said Nils Jensen, Mayor of Oak Bay. "This project also demonstrates Oak Bay's commitment to the preservation and enhancement of our natural environment, the provision of accessible green amenities to our residents, and the education and heightened awareness of our youth."

The Municipality of Oak Bay will undertake the project in partnership with the Bowker Creek Initiative (BCI), comprised of the Capital Regional District and the municipalities of Oak Bay, Victoria and Saanich, as well as community groups and institutions such as the University of Victoria and the Urban Development Institute.

"With the recent acceptance by all three municipalities of the *Bowker Creek Blueprint: A 100-year action plan to restore the Bowker Creek watershed*, moving forward with this project is a true "watershed moment" for the creek and the community," said Jody Watson, Chair of the BCI. "It will be a wonderful example of how a long term coordinated plan to restore function to a degraded watershed can happen, piece by piece, and when opportunities arise, when we work together towards a common vision."

"This is a wonderful opportunity to maximize teaching opportunities at the creek site while supporting sustainable approaches to stormwater management," said Ida Chong, Minister of Community, Sport and Cultural Development. "It is gratifying to see such innovative ideas come to fruition through the Gas Tax Fund, to the benefit of Bowker Creek and area learners."

The Government of Canada, through the Gas Tax Fund, provided \$738,000 toward the Bowker Creek restoration project.

Canada's Gas Tax Fund provides stable, long-term funding to local governments and other organizations to help them build and revitalize public infrastructure. This program primarily supports capital projects such as local roads, public transit, energy systems and waste management infrastructure that lead to cleaner air, cleaner water or reduced greenhouse gas emissions. The Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM) administers the Gas Tax Fund in BC in collaboration

with Canada and British Columbia. On December 15, 2011, the Government of Canada passed legislation to make the Gas Tax Fund a permanent annual investment.

"The rehabilitation of urban creeks and streams is a priority in many BC communities," said Heath Slee, President of UBCM. "UBCM appreciates the support provided by the Gas Tax Fund to improve riparian areas and aquatic habitat."

For further information on the Government of Canada's infrastructure investments in British Columbia, visit [www.infrastructure.gc.ca](http://www.infrastructure.gc.ca). To learn more about Canada's Economic Action Plan, visit [www.actionplan.gc.ca](http://www.actionplan.gc.ca). Please visit [www.bowkercreekinitiative.ca](http://www.bowkercreekinitiative.ca) to find the detailed *Bowker Creek Blueprint: A 100-year action plan to restore the Bowker Creek watershed*.

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