

# Partnership for Water Sustainability in British Columbia

(Incorporated under the Society Act of British Columbia)

---

## FCM - 2011 Sustainable Communities Conference

*Session title: Steal This Idea!*

### **Mission Possible: A 50-Yr Vision for Urban Watershed Protection**

(Presented by Kim Stephens, Executive Director)

---

**CONCEPT:** *Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery. Grab some cutting-edge ideas from eight innovators across Canada, who will share their breakthrough examples of municipal sustainability in a range of sectors. A short presentation to spark your imagination will lead into small group discussions. Three half-hour sessions will give you the chance to check out your favourite ideas and get the scoop on how to bring them back to your own community!*

**FORMAT:** *At the start of the session, each roundtable host will stand up and give a one minute overview of their topic. Delegates will then be asked to select a roundtable. Each host will give short presentations (10 minutes) to groups of 10 people at their table, followed by questions and discussion. There will be 3 half-hour rotations of 30 minutes each.*

### **ROUNDTABLE TOPIC OVERVIEW:** (1-minute statement)

In British Columbia, the Partnership for Water Sustainability has a vision for reconnecting communities with the land. Simply put, we believe if we respect the land, WATER SUSTAINABILITY will follow. Getting there requires a change in mind-set.... and LAND ETHIC.

We are CONNECTING THE DOTS between land use planning, development, watershed health AND infrastructure asset management. When communities are guided by a DESIGN WITH NATURE philosophy, water sustainability can be achieved. It will be achieved by implementing GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE policies and practices.

We describe this as MISSION POSSIBLE..... because those operating in the local government setting can now access tools and experience..... that will enable them to make a difference. Our approach is TOP-DOWN / BOTTOM-UP. It is keyed to three words: ALIGNMENT, COLLABORATION, INTEGRATION.

We are CONVENING FOR ACTION. When we gather, it is for a purpose. There must be an outcome. We are challenging those in local government: WHAT DO YOU WANT THIS PLACE TO LOOK LIKE IN 50 YEARS? To get there, you will have to start now. Actions ripple through time.

Water sustainability is the lens to focus attention on how we can manage the BUILT ENVIRONMENT more sustainably. We will be successful when SETTLEMENT CHANGE IS IN BALANCE WITH ECOLOGY. This is how we will restore the health of our URBAN WATERSHEDS.

# Partnership for Water Sustainability in British Columbia

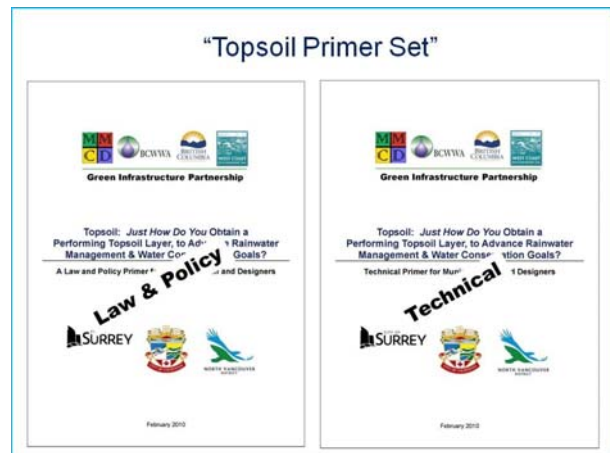
(Incorporated under the Society Act of British Columbia)

## ROUNDTABLE CONVERSATION STARTER:

Introduce and elaborate on the four dimensions to the Action Plan. Then cascade down to the Regional Team Approach and specifics, in particular: Showcasing Green Infrastructure Innovation; the Convening for Action process (to get to shared vision/responsibility/call to action, etc); and the Topsoil Primer Set.

One idea that is “easy to steal” is the TOPSOIL PRIMER SET. We wish to see it replicated across BC. Local governments can take it and run with it. The Okanagan Basin Water Board is now taking the lead in enhancing the package to create a TOPSOIL BYLAWS PRIMER.

CONVENING FOR ACTION brings stakeholders together, supported by the province, but led by local government. Collaboration and integration: a true bottom-up approach that identifies the issue and then seeks to address it through the alignment of all stakeholders, with emphasis on local government needs.



# Partnership for Water Sustainability in British Columbia

(Incorporated under the Society Act of British Columbia)

## FIRST ANNOUNCEMENT

Since 2003, the Province of British Columbia and the Real Estate Foundation of British Columbia have jointly funded development and implementation of the **Water Sustainability Action Plan for British Columbia**. Under this umbrella, a partnership network has successfully demonstrated how to:

1. Promote the vision and principles of 'water-centric' planning.
2. Align federal, provincial, regional and local policies and actions about green infrastructure.
3. Implement *Living Water Smart, British Columbia's Water Plan* on the ground.
4. Develop web-based tools that support better land use and infrastructure decisions.
5. Connect the dots between our ethic for use of land and the consequences for water sustainability.
6. Organize 'convening for action' forums that advance alignment, collaboration and integration.
7. Move forward with a 'regional team approach' to ensure consistency and 'do more with less'.
8. Support the learning environment necessary to explore and embrace innovation.
9. Build practitioner leadership to 'design with nature' to adapt to climate change.
10. Make real the notion of '*shared responsibility – choose to be enabled*'.

Founded upon the principle of collaboration, the newly created **Partnership for Water Sustainability in British Columbia** is an autonomous society. The Partnership provides a legal entity for further evolution and delivery of Action Plan elements. The mandate of the Partnership is to build on the existing Action Plan foundation and create a lasting legacy through these Action Plan elements:

- *Water Balance Model* and *Water Bucket Website*, the 'twin engines' of the Action Plan program.
- *Convening for Action in British Columbia*, and *CAVI - Convening for Action on Vancouver Island*.

The vision of the Partnership is that water sustainability will be achieved through implementation of green infrastructure policies and practices. How communities in BC get there relies on a change in mind-set. The Partnership mission is to facilitate that change.

Tim Pringle, Executive Director of the Real Estate Foundation from 1988 until 2008, is a founding Director and the first President of the Partnership. The four other founding Directors are:

- Ted van der Gulik, Chair of the Water Balance Model Inter-Governmental Partnership
- Mike Tanner, Chair of the Water Bucket Website Partnership
- Richard Boase, Co-Chair of the Water Balance Model Partnership
- Peter Law, representing CAVI

Kim Stephens is Executive Director of the Partnership. For more information, please contact him at [kstephens@watersustainabilitybc.ca](mailto:kstephens@watersustainabilitybc.ca). **Please visit our blog:** <http://watersustainabilitybc.blogspot.com/>

November 9, 2010

