



Watersheds 2014

Towards Watershed Governance in British Columbia and Beyond

January 27–29, 2014
Quw'utsun' Cultural and Conference Centre
Duncan, British Columbia

A forum for water practitioners, watershed groups, First Nations, and other decision-makers

This is not a forum for talking heads, but a “roll-up-your-sleeves-and-get-to-work” event. Come prepared to share your experiences and learn from your peers. The entire forum has been designed with participants’ needs at top of mind and sessions have been customized to address priority topics. The following list is a sneak-peek sampling of what you can expect at this one-of-a-kind event. We can’t wait to see you there.

Keynotes, Plenaries & Panel Sessions

The U.K. Experience: How Watershed Ambassadors Make Watershed Governance Work

Watershed Ambassadors are local citizens who educate on good watershed management practices and assist in dispute resolution. Learn how this approach is working in the U.K., and how it could be apply in your home watersheds.

The Cowichan Experience: An Adventure in Governance Evolution

Launched in 2010, the Cowichan Watershed Board works to address the challenges of managing water and watersheds in a holistic way. This session will focus on how the CWB is succeeding in building local trust and offer lessons for other organizations facing similar challenges.

Resilience Thinking: The Missing Link in Watershed Governance?

This session will explore “resilience thinking”—the ability to deal with change in a watershed. Using progressive examples from around the world, learn new tools for dealing with crises, and the crucial role of collaborative watershed governance.

Straight from the Source: Drinking Water Source Protection Planning

This session will offer insights from a diversity of experts on the latest developments in source drinking water protection, and programs that are taking a watershed approach.

Taking the Pulse: Water Attitudes, Opinion Research & the Power of the Poll

What exactly does the average person think about water in Canada? And what does this mean for freshwater protection and sustainability? Learn how understanding public opinion can improve your communication and lead to on-the-ground change.

First Nations & Water: The Role of Rights & Title in Watershed Decision-Making

There is much that the rest of Canadian society could learn by listening carefully to what First Nations have to say about how to sustain land, water, and communities. This session will explore the role of First Nations in watershed decision-making and issues of rights and title.

Making the Grade: Watershed Report Cards & Indicators

This session will focus the influence and effectiveness of watershed report cards on watershed management, and look at how report card recommendations can be turned into on-the-ground action.

Successes & Challenges: From the Front Lines of Watershed Governance

Featuring panellists from across the country, this session will describe successes and delve into the main barriers to effective watershed governance, including sustainable financing, volunteers and engagement, and formal decision-making.

Water, Social Innovation & Governance: An Open Space Learning Session

Recognizing that the “best conversations” at events often occur during discussions on break, we have purposefully devoted time for participants to engage with each other. This open-structured session will allow groups to explore themes that have emerged during the forum in greater detail. You design the agenda. We provide some simple guidelines. Come join the conversation!

What’s Law Got to Do with It? Recent Legal Changes Affecting Watersheds

With provincial, federal, local, and First Nations’ perspectives, explore important changes to water legislation/policy—and what these changes mean for you. The complementary Legal Tools for Watershed Protection workshop will offer more in-depth learning.

Water as Our Relative: Redefining How We View Water in Governance Processes

This session will focus on acknowledging water as something with a spirit and life force; the role of women in water governance; and transforming the status quo for water governance by using core indigenous/in-situ value and belief systems.

Where Do We Go From Here? The Future of Watershed Governance

This concluding session will offer a space to gather together lessons learned during the forum, and provide tools to answer that age-old question: “Are you ready for watershed governance?”

Legal Tools for Watershed Protection

Leads: Deborah Curran & Calvin Sandborn, Environmental Law Centre, University of Victoria

This workshop will explore the different ways that local governments and communities can work towards watershed protection, with a focus on drinking water protection, water use planning, community planning, and infrastructure adaptation.

How Can We Plan for the Future in a Climate-Changed World?

Lead: Deborah Harford, Adaptation to Climate Change Team (ACT), Simon Fraser University

This workshop will focus on planning for future impacts on water systems, including hydrologic models, economic analysis and trade-offs for watershed outputs, key audiences, and policy recommendations and topic areas.

Developing a Water Conservation Plan for Your Community

Lead: Madelaine Martin, British Columbia Ministry of Community, Sport & Cultural Development

Specifically geared to those who manage water systems, this workshop will cover the steps to develop an effective water conservation plan. It will draw on the newly updated Water Conservation Guide for British Columbia, published by the Ministry of Community, Sport & Cultural Development, POLIS Project, and Okanagan Basin Water Board.

Collaborative Planning & Action for Healthy Watersheds & Communities

Lead: Steve Litke, Fraser Basin Council

This workshop will cover the basics of watershed planning, including issues that can be addressed through this process. We will also explore a range of other water-related planning processes available in B.C., including lessons learned—particularly regarding collaborative approaches to planning, getting started, and success factors.

Connecting Water Science & Decision-Making

Leads: Ryan van der Marel & Heather Leschied, Wildsight

How can we identify the right science and information to inform policy and management? When is participation by individual citizens, stewardship groups, or government partnerships effective? Using Living Lake Canada's experience in monitoring, mapping, and inventory for water and watershed needs, this workshop will focus on understanding the best principles to inform decision-making at all levels.

What'd You Say? How to Talk about Water & Watersheds

Lead: Laura Brandes, POLIS Project on Ecological Governance, University of Victoria

This workshop will focus on communications skills, tools, and techniques for engaging a diversity of audiences. From media relations and social media, to the role of metaphor and visual communication, to writing and public speaking, learn about the importance of thoughtful engagement and the variety of creative ways you can reach your audience—and have some fun while you're at it!

A New Bag o' Tricks: Engaging "the Public" in Watershed Governance

Lead: Susi Porter-Bopp, Canadian Freshwater Alliance

How can "the public" be actively involved in planning for and making decisions about healthy local watersheds? In this dynamic session, learn practical tools and techniques like storytelling, listbuilding, and constituent mapping that can help communities cultivate strong public engagement in creating vibrant and resilient watersheds.

Learning Together to Address the Health & Well-Being Dynamics of Watershed Governance

Lead: Margot Parkes, University of Northern British Columbia

This workshop will provide an opportunity to learn about successful partnered initiatives—involving researchers, practitioners, watershed stewards, and decision-makers—that focus on watersheds as the setting for enhancing social and environmental determinants of health. We will also learn about tools, such as rich-picture mapping, digital storytelling, and spatially referenced archives, to inform how "unusual allies" can work together.

Pooling Our Water Knowledge: Assessing the Health of Canada's Water Wealth

Leads: Tony Maas & James Snider, WWF-Canada

In this workshop we will discuss the impetus for WWF's ecosystem-based Canadian Freshwater Health Assessment initiative and plans for rolling it across the country. We'll then go deeper into the guts of the assessment framework by applying it to a B.C. river system, gather feedback on how to improve it, and discuss if and how it can serve as a foundation for building a water movement in B.C. and beyond.

Water-Use Reporting for the 21st Century

Leads: Nelson Jatel & Anna Warwick Sears, Okanagan Basin Water Board

This workshop will introduce the BC Water Use Reporting Centre (BC WURC)—why we needed it, how it's improving our management and modelling, how it can be customized for other watersheds, and future plans for gathering data from many sources and putting it to work!

A New Water Act & the Future of Watershed Governance in B.C.

Lead: B.C. Ministry of Environment

This workshop will provide a space for discussion about the implications of a new B.C. Water Act on watershed governance in the province.

A Cowichan Watershed Field Trip

This is your chance to get up close and personal with the Cowichan watershed. This field trip will showcase local innovations in watershed management and governance, as well as the Cowichan River—a designated Canadian Heritage River.