

## 1. Moving from Awareness to Action in BC

The Province of British Columbia has provided a 'design with nature' policy framework that enables local governments to build and/or rebuild communities in balance with ecology:

*This is what we want to collectively and incrementally achieve over time, and this is how we will work together to get there.*

The future desired by all will be created through alignment of federal, provincial, regional and local policies and actions.

### Guiding Principles

In *Beyond the Guidebook 2010*, we draw on BC case study experience to illustrate how success will follow when local government elected representatives, administrators and practitioners:

1. Choose to be enabled.
2. Establish high expectations.
3. Embrace a shared vision.
4. Collaborate as a 'regional team'.
5. Align and integrate efforts.
6. Celebrate innovation.
7. Connect with community advocates.
8. Develop local government talent.
9. Promote shared responsibility.
10. Change the land ethic for the better.

Major breakthroughs happen when decision makers in government work with grass-roots visionaries in the community to create desired outcomes.

The 'regional team approach' is founded on partnerships and collaboration; and seeks to align actions at three scales – provincial, regional and local.



*"Everyone needs to agree on expectations and how all the players will work together, and after that each community can reach its goals in its own way."*

Eric Bonham  
CAVI Leadership Team

### Enabling Philosophy

BC local government is among the most autonomous in Canada, and BC is perhaps the least prescriptive province.

Historically, the Province has enabled local government by providing policy and legal tools in response to requests from local government. Local government can choose to act, or not.

In general, the enabling approach means the onus is on local government to take the initiative. The Province recognizes that communities are in the best position to develop solutions which meet their own unique needs and local conditions.

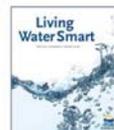
This enabling philosophy has become a driver for a **Regional Team Approach** to implementing a new culture for urban watershed protection and restoration.

### Call to Action

The program goals for Living Water Smart, BC's Water Plan and the Green Communities Initiative constitute a 'call to action' on the part of BC local governments.

The Water Sustainability Action Plan for British Columbia is a primary implementation interface with local government. The Action Plan program demonstrates what can be achieved through a 'top down and bottom up' strategy.

*Beyond the Guidebook 2010* describes how water sustainability can and will be achieved through implementation of green infrastructure policies and practices. Getting there relies on a change in mind-set.



#### A Call to Action



#### Living Water Smart, BC's Water Plan

and the **Green Communities Initiative** provide a vision of what the regions of our province can look like if local governments.....

- prepare communities for climate change,
- choose to live water smart, and
- strive to build greener communities

**Climate Change Adaptation:** In an opening address at the 2008 Annual Conference of the BC Water & Waste Association (BCWWA), Jim Mattison discussed the two responses to climate change: mitigation and adaptation.

"**Mitigation** is alleviating the effects of climate change through reducing greenhouse gasses," Mattison stated. "**Adaptation** is responding to the changes that will inevitably occur."

"Mitigation and adaptation are both necessary and complementary strategies to cope with the climate change challenge. If mitigation is about CARBON, then adaptation is about WATER.

Jim Mattison identified four key policy areas that need work to support adaptation planning. These are: sustainability, adaptability, efficiency and collaboration.

By choosing to live water smart and build greener neighbourhoods, communities will be more prepared for climate change.

Living Water Smart, BC's Water Plan and the Green Communities Initiative are both about adaptation. They encourage 'shared responsibility' in the local government setting so that 'green choices' by all players will achieve 'design with nature' outcomes. *(To learn more, refer to Chapter 6.)*

**Build Greener Communities:** Figure 1 illustrates the progressive changes in hydrology and resulting impacts on stream health when land use change alters the Water Balance. Hence, the lynch-pin of Living Water Smart is this objective:

- *By 2012, all land and water managers will know what makes a stream healthy, and therefore be able to help land and water users factor in new approaches to securing stream health and the full range of stream benefits.*  
(p 43 in Living Water Smart)

As total runoff volume increases (as impervious area increases), so does the magnitude of the channel-forming event. As volume increases, the stream channel erodes to expand its cross-section.

A critical parameter for erosion is the number of runoff events per year that equal or exceed the magnitude and duration of the natural channel-forming event – i.e. before urbanization altered the Water Balance. *(To learn more, refer to Chapter 2.)*

By building greener communities, this creates opportunities to protect and/or restore the natural Water Balance. When the Built Environment is enhanced through a water-centric approach, and is guided by 'design with nature' principles, the resulting benefits cover a spectrum of outcomes - from community liveability to stream health.

## A Perspective on Climate Change

*"If mitigation is about CARBON,  
then adaptation is about WATER."*



Jim Mattison, Assistant Deputy Minister  
Water Stewardship Division  
Ministry of Environment  
April 2008

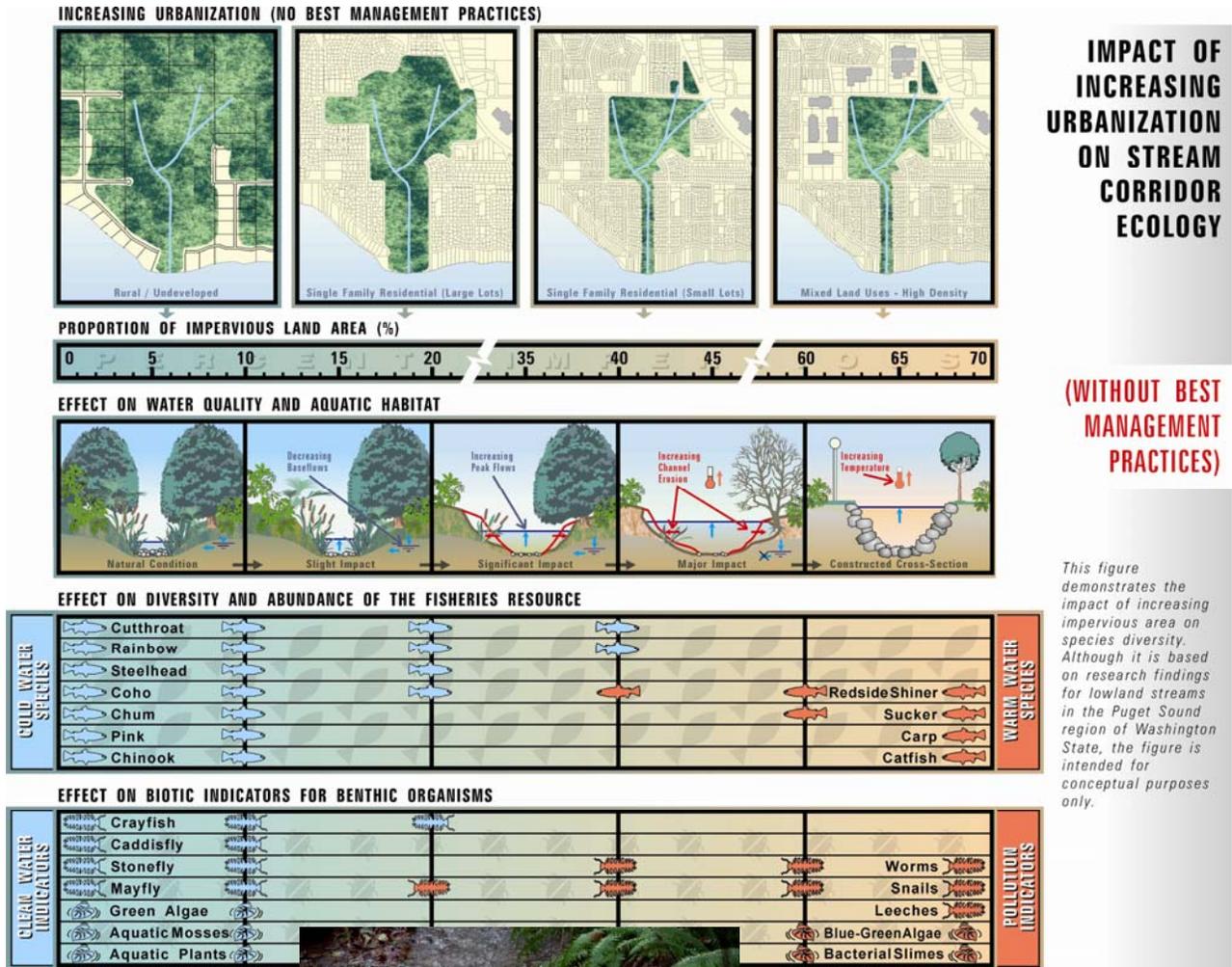
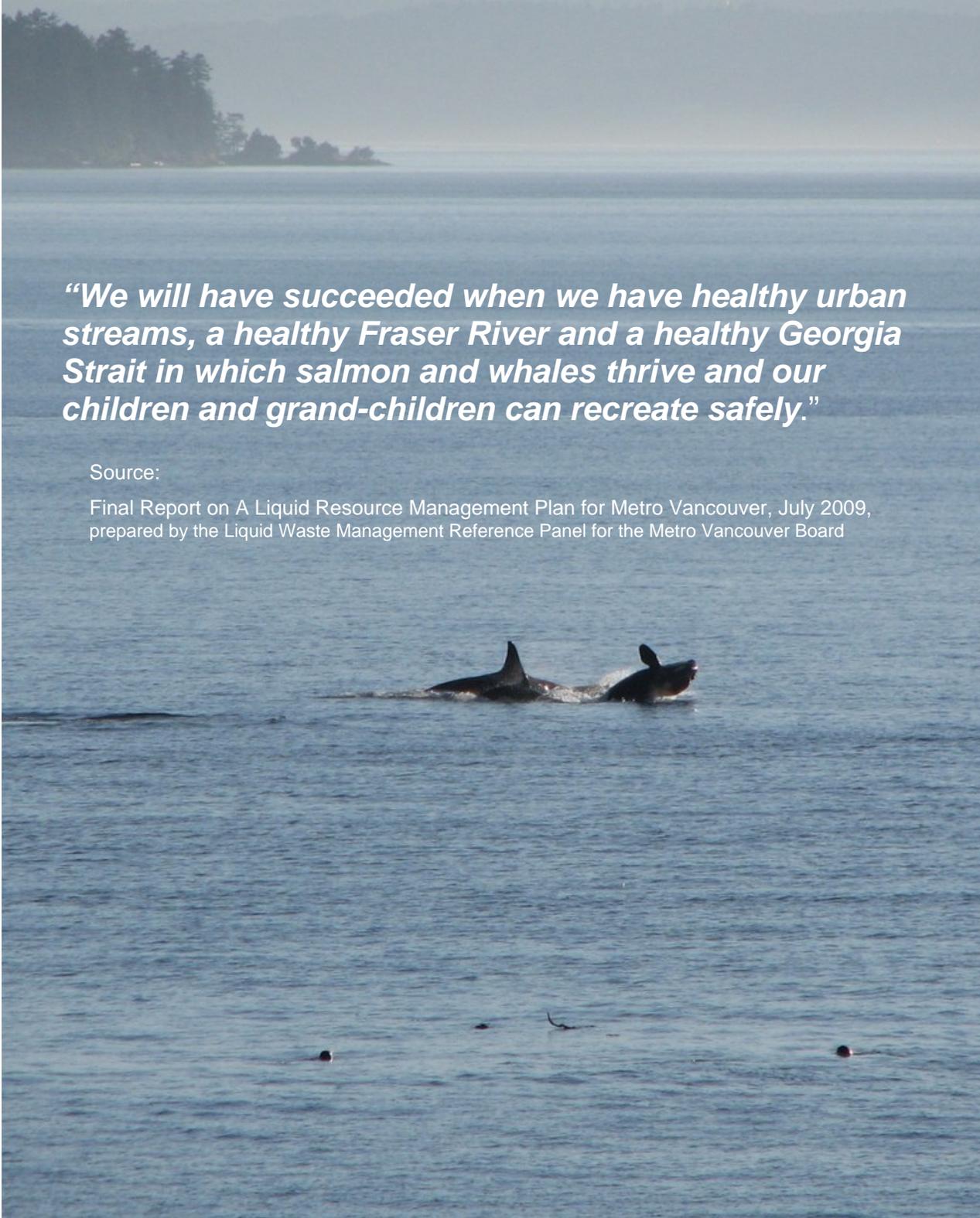


Figure 1

Source: Stormwater Planning: A Guidebook for British Columbia, 2002



*“We will have succeeded when we have healthy urban streams, a healthy Fraser River and a healthy Georgia Strait in which salmon and whales thrive and our children and grand-children can recreate safely.”*

Source:

Final Report on A Liquid Resource Management Plan for Metro Vancouver, July 2009,  
prepared by the Liquid Waste Management Reference Panel for the Metro Vancouver Board

Photo Credit: Jim Dumont