

#### Note to Reader:

The Partnership for Water Sustainability is guided by the vision for Living Water Smart in British Columbia<sup>1</sup>. The umbrella for Partnership initiatives and programs is the Water Sustainability Action Plan for British Columbia<sup>2</sup>. In turn, the Action Plan is nested within Living Water Smart, British Columbia's Water Plan.

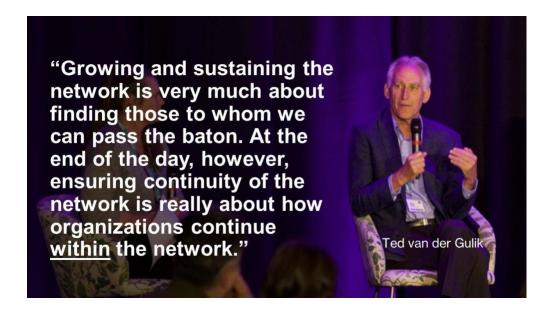
This Annual Report 2022 presents a big picture look at what the Partnership represents, what it does, and how it will continue to evolve. The Annual Report complements Celebration of Our Story: Genesis / First Decade / What Next. released in November 2020.



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> https://waterbucket.ca/wcp/wp-content/uploads/sites/6/2017/11/livingwatersmart\_book.pdf

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> https://www.waterbucket.ca/cfa/sites/wbccfa/documents/media/81.pdf

# **President's Perspective on a 3-Year Transition Strategy for Ensuring Continuity of the Network**



#### Make it so!

The long-term success of the Partnership is founded on recognizing when there is either a need or a watershed moment, and then creating a self-fulfilling prophecy. We have done this repeatedly over the years and decades. Notable examples are EAP, the Ecological Accounting Process, and the suite of online calculators that the BC Agricultural Water Demand Model has spawned.

Last October, the Partnership leadership team convened in Nanaimo. We looked back to see ahead. We reflected on how we would ensure the continuity of the Partnership network. We emerged from our session with the concept for a 3-year transition strategy to create a self-fulfilling prophecy once again.

The Partnership itself is a unique approach to collaboration because we place the emphasis on growing the network within a constellation of networks. We know that from our conversations with Dr. Jane Wei-Skillern of the Haas Business School at the University of California Berkeley.

A foundational idea is that we are not building a "PWSBC organization" per se. But there will always be the need for an "engine" or guiding force, which is the Partnership leadership team. And we cannot just be cheerleaders and facilitators. We must also continue to develop tools and resources that others may not even contemplate. That is one of our strengths. That sets us apart.

Growing and sustaining the network is very much about finding those to whom we can pass the baton.

#### **Year One of the 3-Year Transition Strategy**

Currently, a challenge facing many organizations is the loss of oral history and long-term understanding due to *organizational amnesia*. This reality is uppermost in our minds as we proceed with Year One of a 3-year strategy.

With the foregoing in mind, this Annual Report is structured in two parts. First, we provide context – we describe how the Partnership embodies collaborative leadership and how we achieve our intergenerational mission through the power and continuity of the network. Then we highlight three Partnership priorities for 2023.

The three priorities align with desired outcomes for a 3-year transition strategy. The defining question is this: Who among the "next generation" will step forward, accept the baton, and provide the type of leadership that would ensure continuity of the network? We have an answer for EAP which is foundational to municipal asset management for sustainable service delivery. EAP is our precedent and our first model for a 3-year transition strategy.

The Partnership has embarked upon a 3-year program to embed EAP in the Mount Arrowsmith Biosphere Research Institute (MABRRI) at Vancouver Island University. MABRRI has accepted the baton and will lead the next stage of EAP evolution. They believe in EAP and are committed to meeting the needs of local government through training of the next generations of planners and local government staff. They have bought into the vision.

Learning from the EAP precedent, we are committed to doing something along the same lines with either the provincial government or other partners. For example, this may be where our objective is to ensure the legacy of tools that others may be relying on for their water use decisions such as those related to water licensing. This means we must establish relationships with a new generation of provincial decisionmakers and staff.

In 2023, our big idea is to convene a workshop for senior managers in the provincial government, up to and including Deputy Ministers. The theme would be helping people meet their mandate. We would build strategically and communicate and coordinate with early adopters.

At the end of the day, ensuring continuity of the network is really about how organizations continue within the network.

Ted van der Gulik, President Partnership for Water Sustainability in BC January 2023

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### **Table of Contents for Annual Report 2022**

### What the Reader will Learn About the Partnership

This document is not a conventional annual report in the way people typically expect one to look like. Rather, it is written to inform and engage the reader through a storytelling approach to sharing of information. We do this because everyone learns through stories.

Part One establishes context for three Tier One priorities described in Part Two. Each of these priorities is the next stage of a notable accomplishment in 2022. This is a building blocks process.

#### PART ONE: About the Partnership (on pages 1 to 9)

- Alignment with BC's Watershed Security Strategy
- Historical Context / Operational Framework
  - Partnership Goals and Objectives
- How the Partnership Functions as Network
  - Collaborative Leadership in Action
- Intergenerational Mission of the Partnership
  - Ambassadors of the Partnership
  - Water as a Metaphor for Collaborative Leadership

## PART TWO: Tier One Priorities for Georgia Basin Inter-Regional Educational Initiative in 2023

(on pages 10 to 16)

- Stories of Inter-Regional Collaboration Series
- EAP, the Ecological Accounting Process, is a game-changer for investing in Stream Systems
- Blue Ecology is a pathway to Water Reconciliation

### **Alignment with BC's Watershed Security Strategy**

Context for the Interested Reader

Over the past 30 years, a series of provincial government initiatives established a direction for water sustainability, including Stewardship of the Water of BC in 1993, the Fish Protection Act in 1997, and the Water Conservation Strategy for BC. The high-water mark is Living Water Smart, British Columbia's Water Plan, released in 2008.

Since its inception, the Partnership for Water Sustainability has been guided by and acted within the 45 actions in Living Water Smart. The enduring strength of Living Water Smart lies in its recognition that collaboration, while important to foster within a legislative framework, also happens outside governments, in communities and non-governmental organizations all across British Columbia.

The *Water Sustainability Act* is another key piece; the Partnership is committed to furthering its implementation and collaborating with the provincial government to fill gaps and improve the legislation. For the past decade, however, the provincial government has been absent from local government processes, resulting in a leadership vacuum.

#### **Watershed Security Strategy and Fund**

In 2022, the provincial government released the Discussion Paper on Watershed Security Strategy and Fund. The Partnership sees this as a golden opportunity for the new Ministry of Land, Water and Resource Stewardship to leverage decades of collaboration to accelerate progress towards Watershed Security Strategy outcomes.

The current consultation process has opened the door for the Ministry to take stock of what has been accomplished through implementation of Living Water Smart Actions and ask, what have we collectively learned in recent years and decades, and what comes next?

We are implementers. Thus, the Partnership focus is on the real-world experience we bring because of our multiple initiatives under Living Water Smart Actions. Under that vision, various building blocks processes have evolved over the decades. The Watershed Security Strategy can be a mechanism to revisit, understand, learn from, and leverage these processes towards better stewardship of BC's water resources for present and future generations.

#### **Building Blocks**

Table 1 provides a snapshot of the connectivity between Partnership Living Water Smart Actions and selected Watershed Security Strategy Outcomes, under three implementation themes: Water Reconciliation, Stream Health, and Food Security.

## **TABLE 1** – Linking the Partnership's Living Water Smart Actions to Watershed Security Strategy Outcomes

The three Living Water Smart theme areas that are listed in the table align with the Partnership's understanding of current provincial priorities:

Reconciliation with First Nations (Water Reconciliation theme)

Adaptation to a Changing Climate (*Food Security and Stream Health themes*)

Settlement, Economy, and Ecology in Balance (*Food Security* and Stream Health themes).

WATERSHED SECURITY STRATEGY OUTCOMES		LIVING WATER SMART ACTIONS Implementation Themes, Settings, and Tools / Resources					
		Water Reconciliation		5	Stream Health	r Food Security	
		Urban / Suburban Setting			Rural / Agricultural Setting		
FIVE:	Integrate water more efficiently and effectively into Land Use Planning		BC Agricultural Water Calculator			BC Agricultural Water Demand Model	
SIX:	Reset the water supply and demand relationship		BC Irrigation Water Use Calculator BC Landscape Water Calculator Water OUT=Water IN Decision Tool			BC Agricultural Water Demand Model Water OUT=Water IN Decision Tool	
SEVEN:	Improve habitats for aquatic ecosystems		Stormwater Planning: A Guidebook for EAP, the Ecological Accounting Proc Water Balance Model Express				
EIGHT:	Integrate Indigenous Knowledge into decision-making and management	Blue Ecology (a water-first ecological methodology)					
NINE:	Strengthen education and outreach about managing water	Beyond the Guidebook Series waterbucket.ca Watershed Moments Symposia Series		ies	Georgia Basin Inter-Regional Education Initiative		

#### **Historical Context / Operational Framework**

#### An Overview for the Interested Reader

The Partnership for Water Sustainability in BC is a non-profit society that delivers peer-based education in collaboration with partner local governments. When the Partnership was incorporated under the BC Societies Act in November 2010, this was a transformative decision.

Morphing of the former "BC water sustainability technical committee" into "The Partnership" ensured continuity, longevity and sustainability in evolving tools, resources and programs developed under the umbrella of the Water Sustainability Action Plan for British Columbia (Action Plan).

The Action Plan is guided by the vision that on-theground initiatives inform Provincial policy through the shared responsibility model.

The Partnership plays a bridging role among the provincial government, local government, and community stewardship sectors. It is the hub (or node) for a "convening for action" network in the local government setting. It delivers Action Plan initiatives and programs through partnerships.

When the Action Plan was released in 2004, it brought together six Action Plan Elements. The Water Balance Model, an online decision support tool, was the centrepiece initiative. The success of this initiative lent immediate credibility because there was a track record of intergovernmental cooperation, communication, coordination and collaboration, AND funding.

Action Plan experience informed development of Living Water Smart, British Columbia's Water Plan, released in 2008, as well as the parallel Green Communities Initiative. The Action Plan is nested within Living Water Smart.

In 2008, Living Water Smart was the provincial government's call to action, and to this day transcends governments. The partnership umbrella provided by the Action Plan has allowed the Province of British Columbia to leverage partnerships to greatly enhance the profile and impact of Living Water Smart.

#### **Partnership Goals and Objectives**

Our mission is to evolve the elements of a fully integrated Action Plan to:

**Promote a watershed-based approach** that manages the natural environment and the built (human-altered) environment as integrated components of the same watershed and results in 'design with nature' outcomes.

**Consider the health and well-being of communities** in the context of a 50-year planning horizon and beyond.

Focus on the social, economic, and environmental benefits of an integrated and sustainable approach to water resource management across the province.

Educate and influence policy makers, practitioners, and stakeholders regarding the benefits of protecting and/or restoring the hydrologic cycle (water balance).

**Build support for a paradigm-shift** in British Columbia that, over time, would result in water being at the heart of decision-making for human activities.

Facilitate move toward a sustainable 'closed loop' approach to water resource management in British Columbia.

**Promote an ecosystem approach** to protecting water resource health which recognizes that what the cell is to the body, the site is to the region.

#### To accomplish the above, we have three objectives that cascade:

Link and integrate all aspects of water resource management and water use.

#### Develop partnerships with organizations and groups to:

- Add the 'water dimension' to community planning and land development.
- Promote change at four scales region, watershed, neighbourhood and site.
- Promote technological and cultural changes, including professional, organizational and societal changes.

#### Find the appropriate balance between:

- Planning process and concrete outcomes
- Changing behaviour and changing practices
- Capture the expertise needed for the task.

#### **How the Partnership Functions as Network**

Context for the Interested Reader

"The Partnership for Water Sustainability in British Columbia is a legal entity. Operationally, however, the Partnership functions as the hub for a network, denoted as the **Living Water Smart Network**," explains Mike Tanner. "This approach reflects our genesis, first as a technical committee and then as a roundtable. We are growing the network. We are not building a conventional organization. The Living Water Smart Network is guided by the collaborative leadership model."

The Living Water Smart Network is guided by a shared vision, which is:

By pulling threads of understanding from the past through to the present and future, it would help communities reconnect people, fish, land, and water in altered landscapes.

"Collaborative leadership uses the power of influence rather than positional authority to engage and align individuals and organizations within a network. Collaborative leadership deliver results across organizational boundaries."

"The network is the ultimate source of strength of the Partnership. The network also holds the key to intergenerational collaboration. It is how we build bridges of understanding and pass the baton from the past to the present and future. In this way, the network is a foundation piece for succession planning and thus continuity."

"For the Partnership to be successful as a catalyst for facilitating changes in practice over the long-term, the hard work on the ground must be done by our partners. This means the mission and work of the Partnership must be aligned with and support their organizational aspirations and objectives."



#### **Collaborative Leadership in Action**

"The Partnership is fortunate to be collaborating with Dr. Jane Wei-Skillern of the Haas Business School at the University of California at Berkeley," continues Mike Tanner. "Dr. Jane is co-author of **The Networked Nonprofit**, groundbreaking research published in 2008. She provides us with a framework to explain what we do intuitively."

#### **Build the Network to get to your Mission Impact**

"In the early 2000s, when I was on the faculty at the Harvard Business School, I began my research into the concept of a networked approach that is more focused on network-building and trust-based relationships, and less about building an organization to get to your mission impact," explains Dr. Jane Wei-Skillern.

"The network emerges around a common goal, rather than a particular program or organizational model. The community mobilizes the resources from throughout the network and based on existing relationships in the community."

"The solution is emergent and comes from the community members themselves, rather than being pushed from the top down. And finally, once a network is up and running and proves itself to be effective, it becomes the primary vehicle for change, rather than the individual organizations themselves."

"Growing the network is all about a culture change. Advancing this agenda in the social impact space requires a different mindset, a different way of working, and most importantly, a commitment to something bigger than ourselves and our organizations."

"It was exciting to hear about the work of the British Columbia Partnership for Water Sustainability and how their approach has exemplified network leadership as I have conceptualized it. It is so similar to what I have seen in my research. It is rewarding to see these ideas validated in practice time and time again."

Dr. Jane Wei-Skillern has identified four counter-intuitive principles for effective networks:

Focus on mission before organization.

Manage through trust, not control.

Promote others, not vourself.

Build constellations, not stars.

#### **Intergenerational Mission of the Partnership**

Context for the Interested Reader

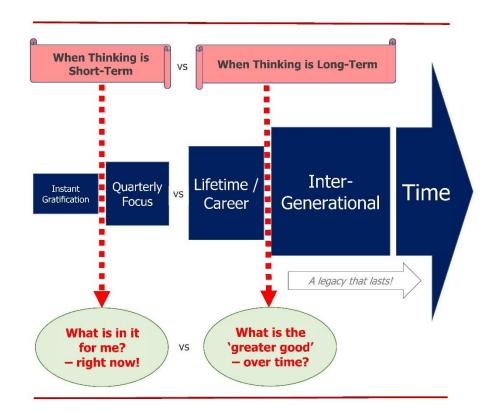
"Policy or technical knowledge alone is not enough to resolve the water challenges that face BC, now and in the future. Creating a *climate for change* requires an appreciation and understanding of human behaviour, combined with a knowledge of how decisions are made in the real world. It takes a career to figure this out," states Derek Richmond, Chair of the Partnership's Ambassadors Program.

"When each generation is receptive to accepting the intergenerational baton and embracing the wisdom that goes with it, the decisions of successive generations will benefit from and build upon the experience of those who went before them."

"Whether and how we deal with uncertainty, manage risk, and adapt to droughts and floods will depend on how effective we are in encouraging a spirit of inter-generational collaboration among decision-makers at all levels within government and with community."

"When members of the Living Water Smart network are successful in achieving their missions, then the Partnership too is successful."

The Time Continuum graphic opposite conceptualizes the way of thinking that underpins the intergenerational mission of the Partnership for Water Sustainability. Influence choices. Capitalize on the REACHABLE and TEACHABLE MOMENTS to influence choices.



#### **Ambassadors of the Partnership Program**

"The Partnership has steadily worked towards a goal to ensure succession, sustainability, and credibility. To achieve this goal, we launched the Ambassadors of the Partnership program in 2021," continues Derek Richmond.

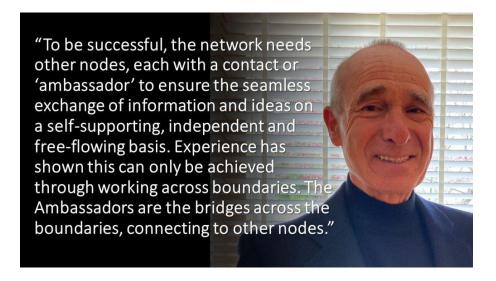
"This flagship program provides formal recognition of individuals who, supported by their organizations, bring special value to the partnership mission for building bridges of understanding through intergenerational collaboration. When we last met with Dr. Jane, she validated that we are doing things right with the Ambassadors program."

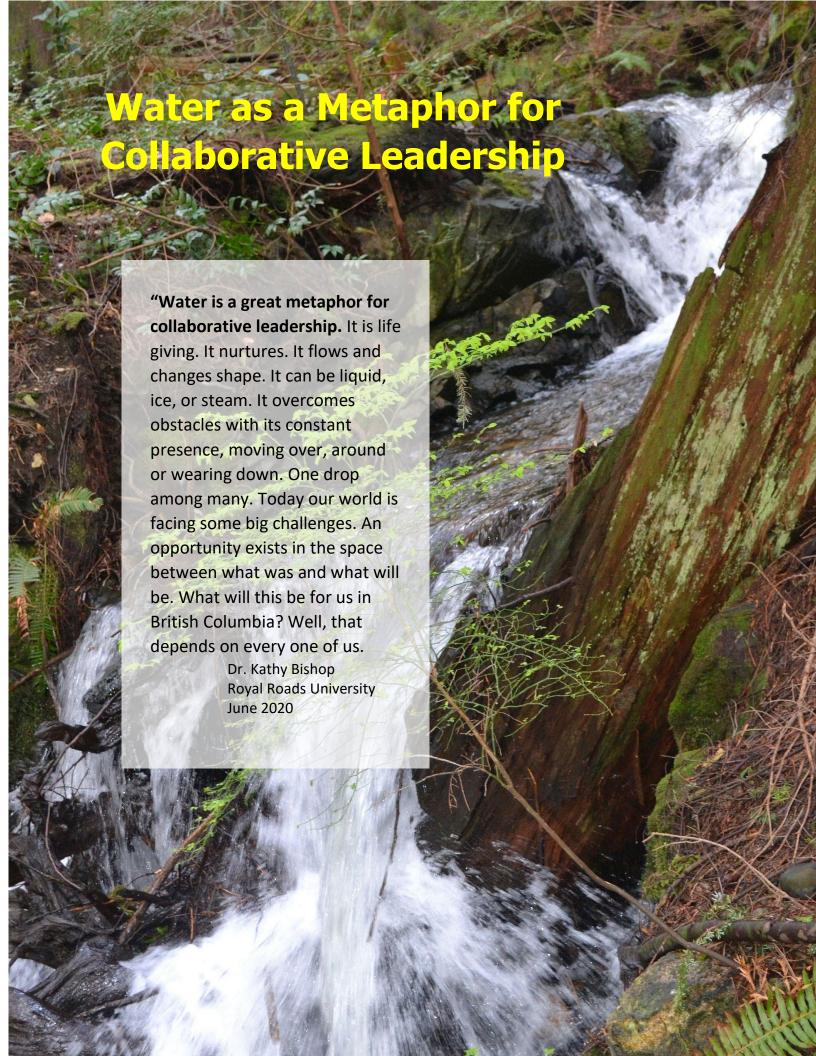
"We knew that intuitively, but it sure helps when a 'neutral' party reaffirms that. The Ambassadors Program complements the Georgia Basin Inter-Regional Education Initiative (IREI) and is emerging as a foundation piece for inter-generational collaboration. This realization was the breakthrough to articulate our need for succession planning and sustainability of the network. This is the WHAT."

"The WHO now becomes obvious as the ambassadors themselves. The HOW is now clear too. As we look back to see ahead, it is clear in that the Ambassadors Program is our pathway to inter-generational collaboration. This applies both to the Partnership itself as a living and breathing legal entity and for the network as a whole."

"Over the years, we have beat on the drum about the 4Cs --- communication, cooperation, coordination and collaboration --- and we focus on commonalities over boundaries. It is intuitive. It has to be intuitive if you are going to be successful. We just put a label on it as the 4Cs. And that is what took off through the IREI."

The Ambassador program complements the **Champion Supporter** of the Partnership recognition program. The primary purpose of the latter is to recognize organizations whose enduring support for The Partnership, and staff participation in Partnership initiatives, is essential for long-term success in realizing the Living Water Smart vision. Individuals may also be recognized as **Champion Supporters** when their contributions are determined to be outstanding.





## Tier One Priorities for Georgia Basin Inter-Regional Educational Initiative in 2023



#### **Stories of Inter-Regional Collaboration Series**

# Ensure that where everyone is going is indeed the right way

During the period between 2006 and 2011, the CAVI-Convening for Action on Vancouver Island program served as a "proof of approach" for collaboration within a region. By 2012, the partner regions were primed for formal collaboration between regions to help each other move forward.

A desired outcome which is transformational in scope and impact, is that all local governments would learn from each other's experience and would understand **how** natural systems support municipal services and would be able to fully **integrate** this understanding and associated methodologies into programs, planning and funding.

There is no formal mechanism to enable or facilitate inter-regional collaboration in British Columbia. The Partnership fills this gap in the southwest corner of the province, where 75% of the population lives, through the Georgia Basin Inter-Regional Education Initiative.

In 2012, the Partnership asked five Regional Boards --- Cowichan Valley, Nanaimo Region, Comox Valley, Capital Region, and Metro Vancouver --- to endorse and actively support inter-governmental and inter-regional collaboration through a program that leverages more with the same resources. And so, the IREI was launched. **Figure 2** illustrates parallel stream of effort and provides relevant context.

"We now have a multi-decade history under the Action Plan umbrella. This allows us to reflect on both the oral and written history, including the context that has informed our actions and thus shaped the journey that we are on," observes Kim Stephens, Partnership Executive.

"In early 2023, the Partnership will begin rolling out the Stories of Inter-Regional Collaboration Series. These 'stories behind the stories' are weaved from conversational interviews. Comprehensive in scope, the stories document a shared history. They are not technical reports, although they are founded on technical concepts and understanding."

"Everyone learns through stories, and this is how we hope to inspire readers. The series is about local government champions who are committed to the long-term wellbeing of their communities. Stories provide insight into the actions of local government thought leaders."

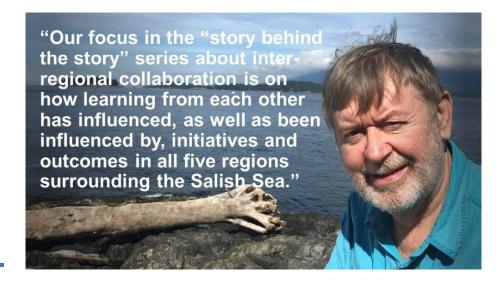
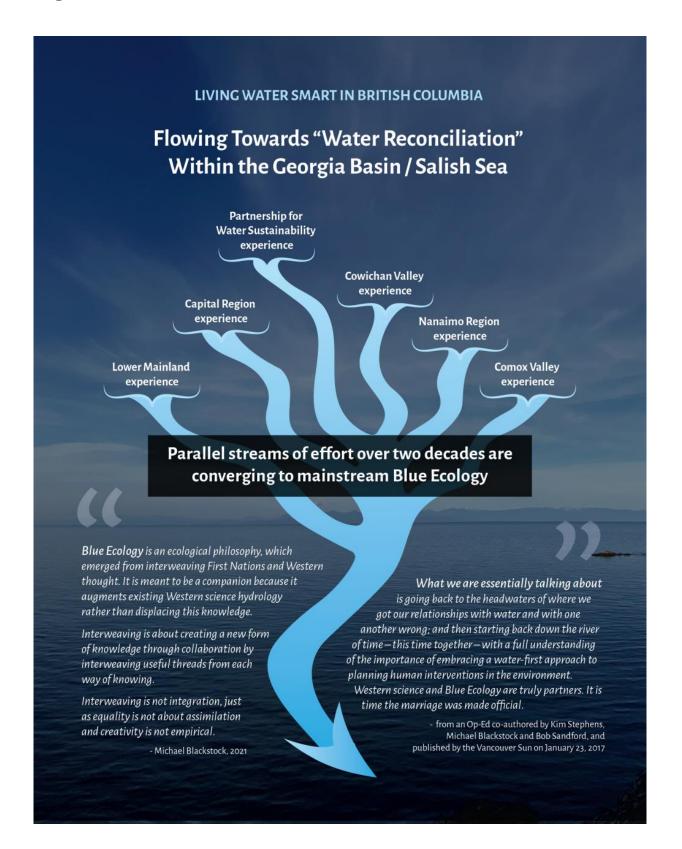


Figure 2



# EAP, the Ecological Accounting Process, is a game-changer for investing in Stream Systems

EAP, the Ecological Accounting Process, provides a methodology and metrics that help local governments make the financial case necessary to operationalize maintenance and management of natural assets, in particular stream corridor systems, through line items in Annual Asset Management Budgets.

EAP aligns with and is an outcome of the paradigm-shift associated with Asset Management for Sustainable Service Delivery: A BC Framework (2014). **Figure 1** distills the essence of EAP.

"EAP has evolved through a building blocks process that began in 2016. It will continue to evolve because the approach is adaptive. The methodology is universal, but the research questions are unique to each situation. In addition, it is neither a cookie-cutter approach nor a consultant-type process," states Tim Pringle, EAP Chair.

"The strength, uniqueness, and power of EAP is that the grounded methodology yields a defensible number which then provides the basis for an annual M&M budget and all the decisions that flow from that capability. The methodology uses the BC Assessment database."

"To achieve the over-arching goal, which is ensuring the continuity and legacy of our various initiatives, we have established a precedent in 2022 with formation of the **EAP Partnership**. We are embedding EAP in a university setting and giving students work experience. This is an exciting how-to-model for implementing a transition strategy."

"The Partnership is embedding EAP within the Mount Arrowsmith Biosphere Research Institute (MABRRI) at Vancouver Island University. We have brought together three willing local governments to operationalize a 3-Year Transition Strategy. This will ensure knowledge is maintained and passed on to the next generations of planners and municipal staff. The goal is to build local government capacity."

### Vision for training the next generation

"We believe that incorporating students from Vancouver Island University and other universities will support understanding and experience within municipal governments on the importance of EAP, and simply understanding EAP. Fortunately, most of VIU's Master of Community Planning, and Master GIS students find themselves working within municipal governments."

> Graham Sakaki, Regional Research Institute Manager, MABRRI

### Figure 1 – EAP makes the financial case for investment in stream corridor systems

Use of EAP methodology refers to "accounting" as taking stock of the social, ecological, and financial (based on data from BC Assessment records) variables that describe a stream system from a land use point of view. The products of this work can be used for planning and budgeting annual investment to maintain (prevent degradation) and manage (restore and enhance) local stream systems.

EAP metrics quantify the financial value of stream systems based on the area definition in the Riparian Areas Protection Regulation and as impacted by land use (human settlement). EAP metrics quantify and describe riparian conditions in the regulated setback zone and in the upland area extending 200m beyond the setback zone.



### Blue Ecology is a pathway to Water Reconciliation

Watershed Moments began as an annual symposia series. In 2020, however, the COVID pandemic changed everything. The Partnership pivoted and reimagined an approach that combined elements of a TED Talk with Zoom and YouTube technology.

The next evolution in the reimagining process is built around Blue Ecology, a water-first approach to achieving water reconciliation through interweaving of Indigenous knowledge and Western science.

"A prime opportunity for building a bridge between two cultures is the Cowichan region's Drinking Water and Watershed Protection service. So, the Partnership has initiated a conversation with the Cowichan Tribes to explore how the Blue Ecology framework applies in their territories," states Richard Boase, Partnership Vice-President.

"In lieu of a symposium, our 'big idea' is to produce a Blue Ecology Circle Tour video, with stops at five First Nations communities, with host themes for the stops based on the five Blue Ecology principles: Spirit, Harmony, Respect, Unity, and Balance. It is still early days."

"It is taking us time to build trust and relationships to the point of being able to showcase Blue Ecology in action. But that is okay. Our philosophy is that it is more important to get it right than to get it done. In the interim, then, we are organizing what we call *bridging seminars* to inform non-Indigenous audiences. We call this Blue Ecology 101."

"The Partnership believes communities have a once in a generation opportunity to get our relationships right with First Nations and water; and then start back down the river of time, this time together."

THE VISION: Build a bridge between two cultures though a water-first approach

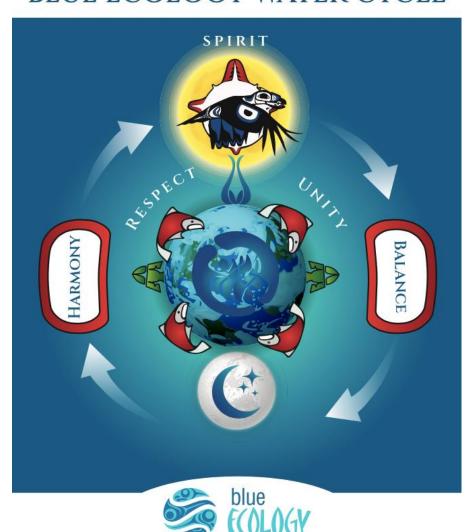
More than a decade ago, international recognition gave Blue Ecology early credibility and profile. However, there was limited awareness within BC of what Michael Blackstock had accomplished on the global stage. Fast forward to November 2017. That is when the Partnership held the Blue Ecology Workshop to begin the process of mainstreaming Michael Blackstock's work and ecological philosophy into the local government setting.

The Blue Ecology bridging seminar in 2022 was the event of record for launching Michael Blackstock's Blue Ecology Institute. "We need to measure progress in different ways. We are not going to measure Water Reconciliation in a year-end report because it is about a mindset change. The proxy for measuring changes in thinking is what you hear people saying in their conversations and dialogues with others about it."

—Richard Boase

### Figure 3 – Five Guiding Principles for Blue Ecology are Spirit, Harmony, Respect, Unity, and Balance

### **BLUE ECOLOGY WATER CYCLE**

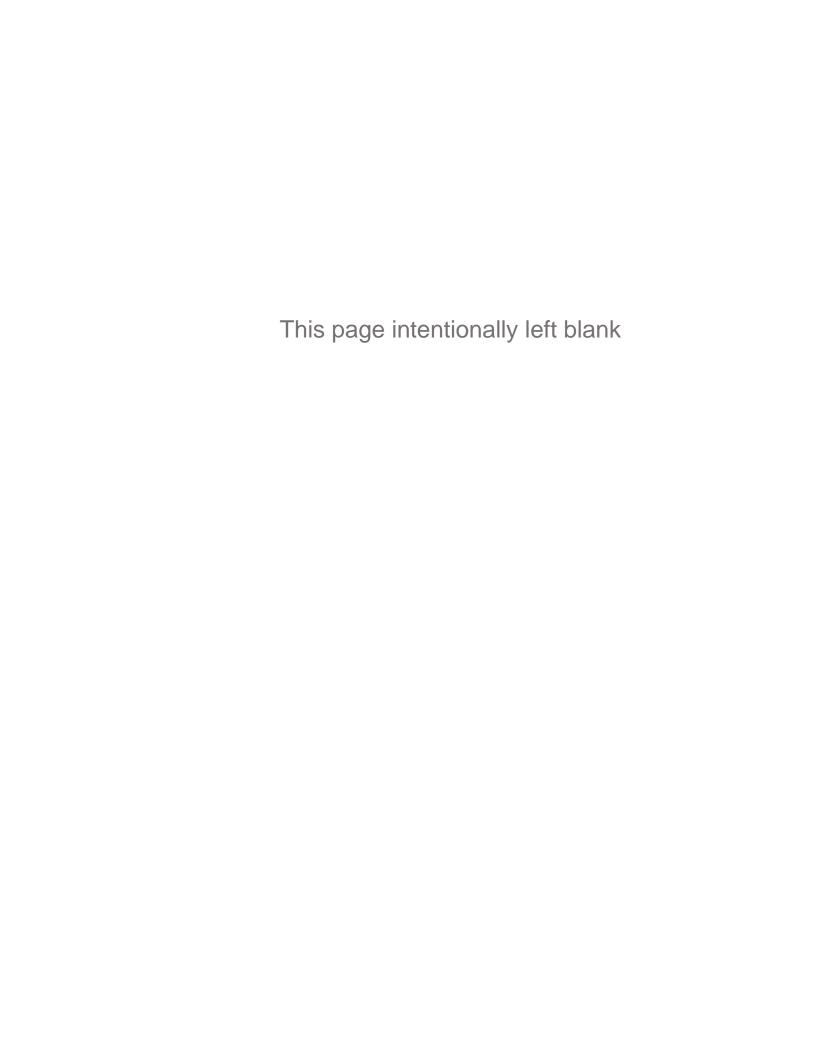


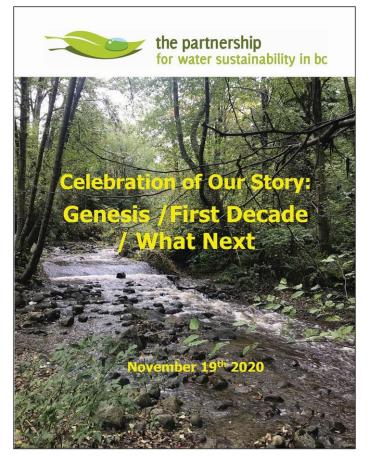
"Interweaving means bring together two different ways of knowing into one new concept that weaves the strengths of both ways of knowing, rather than criticizing one or the other; or trying to make them compete.

"It is a more collaborative way of knowing. There is a sense of humility that comes with interweaving and acknowledging that Western science is not the only way of knowing. There are other ways of knowing."

"And so, the humility part is interweaving the strengths of those other ways. The big picture context for Blue Ecology is the daunting climate change crisis that now confronts the world. We need everyone working on the solution. So that is part of the long-term goal of the Blue Ecology interweaving approach."

Michael Blackstock





TO LEARN MORE, VISIT: https://waterbucket.ca/about-us/

# About the Partnership for Water Sustainability in British Columbia

Incorporation of the Partnership for Water Sustainability in British Columbia as a not-for-profit society on November 19, 2010 was a milestone moment. Incorporation signified a bold leap forward.

Over two decades, the Partnership had evolved from a technical committee in the 1990s, to a "water roundtable" in the first decade of the 2000s, and then to a legal entity. The Partnership has its roots in government – local, provincial, federal.

The Partnership has a primary goal, to build bridges of understanding and pass the baton from the past to the present and future. To achieve the goal, the Partnership is growing a network in the local government setting. This network embraces collaborative leadership and inter-generational collaboration.

The Partnership believes that when each generation is receptive to accepting the intergenerational baton and embracing the wisdom that goes with it, the decisions of successive generations will benefit from and build upon the experience of those who went before them.

