



the partnership  
for water sustainability in bc

**Theme: When we are part of a network,  
everyone goes further!**

**"My research is really just bringing us back to the basics of what matters - human to human connection, trust-based relationships AND community." – Jane Wei-Skillern**

### Why the Partnership is hosting a forum

Provide a safe space for conversations between current local government staff who are working in the frontline trenches and "alumni" who are retired from leadership positions.

### The forum will be fun and interactive

Learn, engage, interact.

Be inspired to create a network of past, current and future leaders. Share information, discuss experiences, support each other.

### Who will lead the Partnership after 2028

The *Ambassadors Program* is the pathway for the next generation of leadership



**Rémi Dubé** is recently retired from the City of Surrey where he was a senior manager. Rémi is the face of the Partnership for a reimagined [Convening for Action in the Metro Vancouver Region](#) initiative for peer-based learning. QUOTE: *"The forum is about you having conversations around tables, not us talking at you!"*



**Michael Blackstock** of [Blue Ecology](#) fame and acclaim is an independent Indigenous scholar. His *Inspirational Keynote* about interweaving perspectives will open the forum. QUOTE: *"Blue Ecology emerged from my frontline experience as a mediator and negotiator for government. Reconciliation means you are humble enough to change your system."*



**Dr. Jane Wei-Skillern** is a Senior Fellow with the Center for Social Sector Leadership at the University of California Berkeley. She is a [network leadership thought leader](#). QUOTE: *"Work is easier, more effective and more fun when people collaborate. The relational foundation is essential to getting any type of work done with others."*

# Agenda for the *Ambassadors of the Partnership Forum* on January 29, 2026

**THEME: When we are part of a network, everyone goes further**

**THE FORUM WILL SEED THREE KEY TAKEAWAY MESSAGES:**

- Local government staff have access to a treasure trove of resources; each other and the alumni.
- We can create a knowledge network by learning from each other's experiences, successes and failures. We can support each other to make everyone's work easier. That is the goal.
- When you marry visionary leadership with technical skills, and you are part of a network, that is when everyone goes further.

12:00	<b>Icebreaker conversations over lunch</b>	<p><b>We seek to build relationships beyond what might be experienced at typical professional gatherings.</b></p> <p><i>Arrive before the clock strikes 12. You will be pre-assigned to a table. Then it is as easy as 1-2-3. Get your lunch, find your tablemates, chat. Once everyone is seated, Rémi Dubé will preview the forum format.</i></p>
1:15	<b>Inspirational Keynote</b>	<p><b>Blue Ecology and Natural Intelligence as a Counterbalance to AI</b></p> <p><i>Michael Blackstock will speak to the vision for Blue Ecology. It emerged from his frontline experience as a mediator and negotiator for government.</i></p>
1:30	SEGMENT ONE: <b>What is Network Leadership</b>	<p><b>How we work together to move network leadership forward where we live and work – trust and relationships are key!</b></p> <p><i>Dr. Jane Wei-Skillern will explain what network leadership means and then lead the group through an interactive exercise.</i></p>
1:45	SEGMENT TWO: <b>Break into small groups and share stories</b>	<p><b>How we create a sense of community and connection by learning from and interacting with each other</b></p> <p><i>Prior to the event, we will be having exploratory conversations with participants. This will help us understand what the group is passionate about and wants and needs. What we glean will be the basis for defining topics to guide group conversations at individual tables.</i></p>
2:45	Stretch & refresh	
3:00	SEGMENT THREE: <b>Townhall sharing</b>	<p>Dr. Jane will conduct the townhall group conversation with support from Rémi and Michael.</p>
3:50	<b>What we heard</b>	<p>Ray Fung will provide his perspective on Aha Moments that emerged during the townhall sharing</p>
4:00	<b>Wrap-up</b>	Rémi Dubé