



YOUR LOCAL ASSET MANAGEMENT COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE IN BC.

Enhancing BC communities through leadership in asset management.

TWENTY FIFTH EDITION – WINTER 2019

Congratulations, you have been elected, now what?

*Christina Benty, prior Mayor of the Town of Golden,
Strategic Leadership Solutions*



In the last newsletter we established a collective understanding of the purpose of local government to deliver services that provide a foundation for the health, well-being, and economic prosperity of our communities. Dependable services such as water,

sewer, transportation networks, attractive public spaces, fire halls, recycling and garbage pickup, and recreation amenities exist to provide basic necessities of life, which we rely on every day. Even though it may seldom enter our stream of consciousness, I am sure you are as much an unbeknownst fan of water and sewer as I am. So, with the election behind us, why does it matter that elected officials focus on these fundamental services? What is it that local government does best and should focus on?

Imagine asking your doctor to cut your hair. Or your accountant to clean your teeth. Surely, they would refuse since that is not where their skill, training, and responsibility lies—and we would not assume it. Why is it that local governments are asked to tackle a broad range of problems far beyond their scope and expertise? Poverty reduction, housing, food security, childcare, and school closures are all critical social issues, and

important community concerns but tend to highly distract from the real work of local government. If resources were unlimited, there would be no problem. However, with ageing water and sewer pipes, deteriorating roads, and depreciating buildings, it begs the question: What is the risk of local government squandering its limited resources outside its mandate? What will the future look like if we continue along this trajectory?

Over the last several decades, there has been growing concern about the financial sustainability of publicly-owned infrastructure. The long-time practice of short-term decisions about investment, maintenance, and

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PARKSVILLE 2019 SYMPOSIUM: Make Where We Live Better through Restorative Development.

Kim Stephens, M.Eng., P.Eng, Executive Director, Partnership for Water Sustainability in BC, In collaboration with Paul Chapman, Executive Director, Nanaimo & Area Land Trust; Peter Law, President, Mid Vancouver Island Habitat Enhancement Society; and John Finnie, Chair, Parksville 2019 Symposium Organizing Committee.

Join delegates from the east coast of Vancouver Island and beyond and attend a ‘watershed moment’ in Parksville. At the **Parksville 2019 Symposium**, you will learn why and how local government partnerships with stewardship groups can be transformational and ‘make where we live better’ to respond better to a changing climate.

Parksville 2019 is a collaborative effort of the Partnership for Water Sustainability in BC, Nanaimo & Area Land Trust, and Mid Vancouver Island Habitat Enhancement Society. We have joined forces to host a field day on April 2, followed by a 2-day symposium on **Water Stewardship in a Changing Climate** on April 3rd and 4th. The daily symposium themes are *Sustainable Stream Restoration* and *Restorative Land Development*, respectively.

TO LEARN MORE AND REGISTER, VISIT

<https://www.civicinfo.bc.ca/event/2019/Parksville-Water-Stewardship-Symposium>

Context for Local Government Action

The ‘worth’ of a creekshed (i.e. small watershed) is defined in terms of a *package of ecological services* made possible by the hydrology. More specifically, hydrology means the three pathways by which rain reaches the stream and ecological services refers to the benefits that streams provide to us. This includes flood and erosion regulation, nutrient cycling, habitat, groundwater recharge, etc. The way we have historically developed, and drained land has disconnected hydrology from ecology.

The consequences of this disconnect are more erosion and flooding, loss of baseflow and aquatic habitat, and an unfunded infrastructure liability for stream stabilization. Communities have for the most part failed to properly address root causes of ‘changes of hydrology’, as well as subsequent impacts of those changes on natural creekshed function.

The bottom-line is that decades of in-stream enhancement work will not be enduring if hydrological function is not restored.

Thus, a goal of restorative land development would be to restore the integrity of the natural water balance. If this work is done right, it should be possible to: first, halt ecosystem decline; and after that, bend the trend-line in an upwards direction.

At Parksville 2019, delegates will learn how communities can apply science-based understanding to increase their **restorative footprint** and at the same time decrease their **destructive footprint**. Delegates will also learn about local government initiatives that are ‘getting it right’ and are moving along pathways that lead to restorative land development. Follow these leaders!

Reconnect Hydrology and Ecology

We experience climate change primarily through water – intense rainfall, floods, droughts and so on. The major driver of economic growth in the twenty-first century will be responding to climate change, redeveloping our nations, revitalizing our cities and towns, and rehabilitating and expanding our ecosystems. This is not some wistful vision of the future: it’s already happening.

“Restoration comprises the largest new economic growth cycle since the beginning of the industrial revolution. Development has arrived at the ends of the Earth. Progress has nowhere to turn, except to revisit and restore what we’ve already wrought,” states Storm Cunningham, author and global thought leader. He is one of three prominent headline speakers from the United States who are part of the Parksville 2019 presentation team. Storm Cunningham, Dr. Chris May and Dave Derrick connect us with a larger body of experience.

The working definition for restorative development, as crafted by Storm Cunningham, follows:

“A mode of economic activity that returns property, structures, or objects to an earlier condition, transforms them into a healthier and/or more functional condition, or replaces an unsalvageable structure without consuming more land.”

Guided by a whole-system, water balance approach, restorative land development would reconnect hydrology and ecology, and this would: reduce stream erosion, flooding and the associated infrastructure liability; increase the dry weather baseflow in streams; and stem the loss of aquatic habitat and fish. Connecting dots, then, a key message is that **restorative land development results in sustainable stream restoration**.

How will communities ‘get it right’ as land develops and redevelops?

The Parksville 2019 Symposium is a milestone event on a multi-year 'convening for action' journey that commenced in 2004 with release of the Water Sustainability Action Plan. Parksville 2019 builds on the 2018 *Vancouver Island Symposium on Water Stewardship in a Changing Climate*, held in the City of Nanaimo.

Nanaimo 2018 was a 'call to action'. The theme? Build on the good outcomes that flow from local government and stewardship sector collaboration! Nanaimo 2018 introduced a vision for 'restorative land development' that would re-establish creekshed function. And it energized the audience with this challenge: *How will communities 'get it right' through collaboration as land develops and redevelops?*

A decade of effort on Vancouver Island, by partnerships of local governments and community stewards, is demonstrating success on the ground where it matters. They are on a pathway to reconnect hydrology and ecology. Parksville 2019 will celebrate success stories that are characterized by three attributes: **commitment, collaboration and the 'hard work of hope'**.

The Bowker Creek and Brooklyn Creek restoration stories are provincially significant precedents. Each has a long history. Each demonstrates how local government partnerships with stewardship groups can be transformational and 'make where we live better'. These precedents represent a range of situations: Bowker in the urban heart of the Capital Region; Brooklyn in the suburban Comox Valley.

A takeaway for Parksville 2019 is that the essential ingredients for restorative development encompass: vision, strategy to deliver the vision, and commitment to implement an ongoing program. Vancouver Island success stories are beacons of hope. They demonstrate how a **good strategy** is the path to success.

AM BC holds successful Conference

The 3rd annual **Asset Management BC** conference was held in September 2018 at the Radisson Hotel – Vancouver Airport in Richmond with approximately 150 in attendance. Planning is already underway for the **4th annual conference to be held November 5 and 6, 2019 at the same location.**

GFOA BC held a pre-conference workshop which was well attended. Our keynote speakers, Bob Sanford on climate change and Diane Kalen -Sukra on change management offered great perspective to our audience.

There was a wide variety of presentations, including First Nations, on integrated Asset Management. Besides our panel on funding with Federation of Canadian Municipalities, Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, Infrastructure Canada and Union of British Columbia Municipalities, we welcomed two special guest speakers from outside of BC, Leanne Brannigan from the Region of Peel in Ontario and Duane Nicol, Chief Administrative Officer from the City of Selkirk in Manitoba.

Leanne Brannigan, presented *Asset Management: Enabling Council Conversations – How to Integrate Technical and Financial Information for Council* which focused on the approach of presenting information to Council as part of their overall strategy. The Asset Management Plan and Long-Term Financial Plan are the basis for developing their strategy. Duane Nicol, presented *Managing the Critical 'Soft' Assets* an overview of a complete asset management program with the key being, as Duane calls it, 'on-boarding Council'. The presentation is on the **Asset Management BC** website along with other conference presentations under the tab, Resources.

Asset Management BC website:

www.assetmanagementbc.ca

4th ANNUAL ASSET MANAGEMENT BC CONFERENCE

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