

sometimes unpopular decisions to fund critical assets and services or raise taxes to do so.

That's why we're working to create a common set of communication tools and resources to help you inform and engage your citizens, staff, Council or Board about the need to maintain our assets, so we can deliver those services.

Following a fall 2018 UBCM resolution, AM BC has been tasked with creating a common message and communications approach that we can use province-wide to spread the word about asset management for sustainable service delivery. Since then we've had a team of asset management 'junkies' on the case.



That's where you come in. We need your help, so we can help you!

Help Us Help You: Let's create the survival kit together.

What do you need?

At the upcoming 4th annual Asset Management Conference, November 6 & 7, 2019 at the Radisson Vancouver Airport Hotel, we want to hear from you. Help us create a BC toolkit of communication resources so you can increase awareness and support for your efforts.

We're hosting a special communications table talk workshop led by facilitators Jan Enns and Christina Benty to find out what you need to help you better communicate with your Councils/Board, staff, and citizens.

In small groups, share what's working well and what's giving you grief. After reporting out and summarizing the issues, we'll break into discussion groups again to identify possible solutions to improve how we can increase awareness and ultimately the support necessary to sustain the services our communities rely on. Then you'll help pick some of your favourite ideas for our Sustainable Service Survival Kit of communication resources.

This is your opportunity to discuss your communication issues and help define the answers. So, be there!

Conference registration is now open at CivicInfoBC (www.civicinfo.bc.ca) under events. Hotel information is provided in the event listing. See you there!



Sustainable Service Delivery in a Changing Climate: A Moment of Reckoning!

*Kim Stephens, Executive Director,
Partnership for Water Sustainability in BC*

Context

Throughout BC today, there are many "elders in action" still doing good work, applying a lifetime of experience and passion to tackle local, regional and provincial matters. Now is the time to learn from their efforts and what it means to be knowledgeable, giving one's time for the common good, working on solutions, and getting results. Elders in action are beacons of hope.

This article builds on the inter-generational article co-authored by the writer for the AM BC Summer newsletter and complements the follow-up article (also published in this newsletter) which highlights a Millennial perspective. Originally prepared for publication as a newspaper Op-Ed, the focus of this expanded article is on how elders are leading by example to bridge a demographic gap until Generations X, Y, and Z take the inter-generational baton.

The article connects four dots: *The Doomsday Clock* – the threat; *Adapt to a Changing Climate* – the challenge; *Improve Where We Live* – the vision; and, *Asset Management for Sustainable Service Delivery: A BC Framework* – an expectation.

Greenland's glaciers are melting; the Amazon forest is on fire. At a moment in history when the phrase "climate emergency" is top of mind for many and given that there is no easy or quick fix, the article reminds us that history repeats itself. Or, as the French writer Jean-Baptiste Alphonse Karr wrote in 1848, "the more things change, the more they are the same".

So, what can the **Asset Management BC** audience do from a sustainable service delivery perspective - and how quickly can the process be set in motion - to successfully tackle the challenges for the built environment caused by the accelerating rate of climate change, and thus **improve where we live**?

When reading this article, two questions for the reader to ponder are: Is it fair and reasonable to characterize professional practice in the current era as being defined by "more technology, less understanding"? Also, is it a valid observation that institutional knowledge, experience and wisdom built-up over decades are typically not being

passed on? Reflect on the questions in this context:

As the job market has shifted over the past several decades, the new norm is job-hopping. Rather than staying at a position or an institution for the long-term, and in so doing acquire in-depth expertise that is foundational to informed decision-making, job hoppers tend to change jobs frequently. A consequence is that “they don’t know what they don’t know”.

The writer hopes that those readers who are part of Generations X, Y, and Z would seek out opportunities for inter-generational inspiration and learning. In short, take the baton offered by those who can help you make a difference to improve where you live in British Columbia!

The message herein is a straightforward one: *Learn from the experience of elders. Build on it. Don’t reinvent the wheel. Get the wheel rolling!*

“Without our elder volunteers this province would fall into the sea. Every one of our communities counts on an army of elder volunteers to deliver the services we all rely on. Whether it is environmental stewardship, equality and social justice, peer care or other integral sectors of community wellbeing, our elders apply their energy and experience to the tasks at hand,” states Paul Chapman, Executive Director, Nanaimo & Area Land Trust.

Learn from History

Viewed in a global context, the 2010s are a “dark decade” – climate emergency, Donald Trump, an amoral collection of world leaders..... the Doomsday Clock is currently set at 2 minutes to midnight – matching 1953. Yet there is hope. Remember, understand, and learn from history.

The 1960s, also a dark decade, was followed by the “decade of the environment”. That is when many of us came of age. We were hopeful about the future. We believed that we could make the world a better place. We dedicated our professional lives to that vision.

Today we are elders. Our mission continues.

Fifty years ago, in 1969, three transformational moments occurred in rapid succession: Ian McHarg published his legendary book “Design with Nature” (April); the Cuyahoga River in Ohio caught fire (June); and Neil

Armstrong landed on the moon (July). For many of my generation, these served as calls to action to improve where we live. Immediately, governments mobilized in response to public demand.

The 1969 Cuyahoga River fire was quickly extinguished, but it sparked public outrage and prompted political action that led to the creation of the US Environmental Protection Agency the following year. In April 1970, the first Earth Day was held. 1971 saw the creation of Environment Canada. The “decade of the environment” was well and truly launched. The world seemed on its way to becoming a better place.

In 2019, will the record rate of melting of Greenland’s glaciers at the same time as the Amazon forest is burning be the “Cuyahoga River moment” for Generations X, Y, and Z?

Elders in Action – Three Examples

A half-century ago, society was galvanized by a daunting challenge. Learn from elders how to do it again. The goal in celebrating three examples of “the hard work of hope” is to open the eyes and minds of up and coming generations of asset management practitioners. A desired outcome is that Generations X, Y, and Z would take the intergenerational baton and dedicate their careers to making the world a better place.

“Engagement of community through stewardship is a credible formula to be encouraged and mainstreamed at every opportunity. Collaboration, teamwork and a recognition that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts is the energy that stokes creativity and determination. When this combination of citizen talent is aligned with a local government that is both visionary and focused, outstanding achievements are not only possible, but realistic,” states Eric Bonham, retired Director, Ministry of Municipal Affairs.

Local governments are implementers. This means they can be change leaders. They can integrate climate adaptation into the activities and actions of engineered and natural asset management – or flipping it around, integrate asset management into the activities and actions of climate adaptation. Local government partnerships with the stewardship sector have the potential to be transformational to ‘improve where we live’.

With the foregoing in mind, three examples of “elders in action” are described as follows. All have relevance to asset management. They underscore why knowledge, experience and wisdom built-up over time are invaluable

in first understanding what needs to be done, and then, how to get it done. When time is of the essence to change our practices, society no longer has the luxury of taking decades to re-invent the wheel.

Lions Gate Treatment Plant, Metro Vancouver:

Motivated by a shared vision that “the future is here, NOW” for restoration of the aquatic environment in Burrard Inlet, three engineers with distinguished careers have been passionate and relentless in collaborating as an interdisciplinary team to convince the Metro Vancouver Regional District to re-think the treatment components for the new Lions Gate Treatment Plant.

Glen Parker (industry) had worked around the world on petroleum industry projects before retiring to become an activist streamkeeper. Dr. Don Mavinic (academia) is an internationally recognized expert in sewage treatment. Dr. Ken Ashley (government) is also internationally recognized, his expertise is in aquatic ecology.

The decision to build a treatment plant has life-cycle implications that are multi-generational in terms of environmental outcomes – for example, the existing Lions Gate facility has been in service for 58 years. Drawing on their unique combination of expertise, these three elders focussed political attention on the need to be visionary and dare to be bold in going beyond what is currently minimum standard of practice.

In 2013, new federal regulations spelled out secondary treatment as the minimum standard required for the new Lions Gate facility. Not good enough, said the three elders. “Recent studies have shown harmful chemicals and pharmaceuticals present in local waters and in juvenile salmon. How stupid would it be to build a \$778 million plant and have it out of date before it even opened,” questions Ken Ashley.

“A months long construction shutdown opened the door to the re-think,” says Glen Parker. “The Federal Government has embraced the vision and is signalling that they will share the cost of adding tertiary treatment. Cleaner water is good for fish and whales!”

“If tertiary treatment is used, the pipes into the ocean used to dilute the sewage could be eliminated; and the cleaned water could be used to re-establish estuary habitat. It is not right that we take water from our streams, pollute it, and bypass the estuaries so we can use the ocean to dilute the pollutants.

“By making presentations to community groups and business leaders, we have experienced how public and

political sentiments can be shifted. Without political support, nothing happens. Many elected representatives seem to operate on the model that anything that gets them votes is by definition ‘right’. This may work for short term issues, but longer-term issues need a different model, or efforts of ‘elders’ to make the wind blow in the ‘right’ direction.”

“Now, there is no looking back.... ‘elders power, combining mind and action’,” concludes Don Mavinic.

Methodology for Valuation of Nature’s Assets:

A second example of elders in action is Tim Pringle and his breakthroughs in pioneering the Ecological Accounting Process (EAP), an initiative to reconnect hydrology and ecology in local creeksheds. Tim Pringle was the inaugural winner of the B.C. Land Champion Award in 2010.

EAP constitutes a “package of innovation” in terms of its philosophy, strategy and deliverables. The focus is on the local government context where practitioners are concerned about practical realities of managing use and conservation of land and ecological services.

Tim Pringle developed the parallel concepts of the “natural commons” (stream corridors and other natural systems) and the “constructed commons” (roads, utilities, schools) as a way for residents, elected persons, and practitioners to understand that ecological services deserve equal consideration when developing municipal asset management strategies.

The natural commons and constructed commons are core local government services essential to social, economic and environmental well-being. This is a foundational principle for a fully integrated approach to asset management that truly aspires to achieve “sustainable service delivery”.

“Traditionally land development is implemented under criteria set out in local government bylaws and other legislation. So-called proven practices of development follow a usual sequence: the community plan, zoning, institutional uses, parks and public spaces, and infrastructure including roads and drainage. This traditional approach does not appreciate hydrology and the streams it supports as systems. EAP addresses this specific deficiency,” explains Tim Pringle.

“EAP provides metrics that enable communities to appreciate the worth of natural assets. A valuation of the land underlying the stream system is based on parcel information supplied by BC Assessment Authority. The EAP methodology can be employed by any local

government to determine worth and value of local streams and their ecological services.”

“An EAP success story is the Town of Comox. The Town modified its land planning decision process for a Draft Neighbourhood Concept Plan when staff recognized that ecological services are not just an add-on. They are, in fact, core municipal services.”

Mitigating a Catastrophic Rockslide on the Seymour River, North Vancouver:

A third example is the Seymour River rockslide in North Vancouver that occurred in December 2014. 80,000 tons of rock slipped off the west bank, reshaped the river and created a barrier to fish passage. Shaun Hollingsworth, chair of the Seymour Salmonid Society, coordinated the response to save the naturally occurring salmon runs in the Seymour.

“After the slide there was a lot of ‘what should we do’, ‘we are not the lead on this issue’, ‘we need more information from so and so’, etc. What Shaun did was corral all the stakeholders in the form of a round table and sort out the issues, the information needed, and a path to a decision. He is an old dog who had worked with all the groups on other issues over the years. He was able to bring them all together,” explains Glen Parker, also a Salmonid Society Director.

“Thanks to the influence of both Shaun Hollingsworth and Ken Ashley, I now include ‘fish’ as a resource, in my holistic approach to modern liquid waste management,” adds Don Mavinic.

A key message is that the networks that elders have in the community can bring groups together quickly in an emergency. The actions of the Salmonid Society saved the naturally-occurring salmon runs in the river. It was hard work, but folks from all walks of life pitched in to make it happen.

This past July, a ceremony was held to celebrate “the achievements of a colossal combined effort aimed at saving a river’s natural fish stocks and assuring the sustainability of this local ecosystem for generations to come”, stated Jonathan Wilkinson, Canada’s Minister of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans.

“The Seymour Salmonid Society is one of many amazing community organizations, operating with a largely volunteer base and managing on a very small annual budget. Just as Streamkeepers and dozens of local hatchery organizations across the province, the Society does remarkable work to maintain and enhance the

natural state of the river and to operate an important hatchery facility.”

Call to Action: It is 2 Minutes to Midnight



‘Asset Management for Sustainable Service Delivery: A BC Framework’ is a game-changer. It sets a strategic direction for local government service delivery. It refocuses business processes on how physical and natural assets are used to deliver services, and support outcomes that reduce life-cycle costs and address risks.

Sustainable service delivery by local government occurs alongside associated evolution in community thinking. By managing the built and natural environments as integrated systems and taking into account how the natural commons and constructed commons provide core services, local governments would incrementally move towards a water-resilient future as an outcome.

Elders are leading by example to bridge a demographic gap until Generations X, Y, and Z take the baton. Learn from our experience. Build on it. Don’t reinvent the wheel. Get the wheel rolling. Time is of the essence. It is 2 minutes to midnight. The future is here, NOW.



New Tools to Help You Integrate Natural Assets into Core Asset Management Processes

*Roy Brooke, Executive Director,
Municipal Natural Assets Initiative*

As our climate continues to change and increasing populations put greater pressure on municipal infrastructure, local governments are turning more and