



the partnership  
for water sustainability in bc

Waterbucket eNews on September 19, 2023  
<https://waterbucket.ca/wscblog/>

# Living Water Smart in British Columbia:

*In 2023, history repeated  
itself in the Kelowna region*



## Note to Reader:

Waterbucket eNews<sup>1</sup> celebrates the leadership of individuals and organizations who are guided by the vision for **Living Water Smart in British Columbia**<sup>2</sup>.

The edition published on September 19, 2023 welcomed readers back for another season of Waterbucket eNews! Between September 2022 and June 2023, the Partnership published 32 feature stories over a 9-month period.

The umbrella for Partnership initiatives and programs is the **Water Sustainability Action Plan for British Columbia**<sup>3</sup>. In turn, the Action Plan is nested within **Living Water Smart, British Columbia's Water Plan**.



<sup>1</sup> <https://waterbucket.ca/wscblog/>

<sup>2</sup> [https://waterbucket.ca/wcp/wp-content/uploads/sites/6/2017/11/livingwatersmart\\_book.pdf](https://waterbucket.ca/wcp/wp-content/uploads/sites/6/2017/11/livingwatersmart_book.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.waterbucket.ca/cfa/sites/wbccfa/documents/media/81.pdf>

## One-Minute Takeaway

On September 19<sup>th</sup> 2023, the Partnership for Water Sustainability in British Columbia welcomed readers back for another season of Waterbucket eNews! Between September 2022 and June 2023, we published 32 feature stories over a 9-month period.

Everyone learns through stories. Through sharing stories of innovation and leadership, the Partnership strives to inspire our readers. Our focus is on issues of concern for watershed, water and food security in the local setting. How will we reconnect people, fish, land, and water in altered landscapes?

### ISSUES OF THE DAY >

**How communities accommodate population growth and provide housing**

**How communities adapt to a changing seasonal water cycle and respond to weather extremes**

### CLEAR & PRESENT RISKS >

**Altered landscape**

**Floods, drought and forest fires**

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## Stories behind the stories

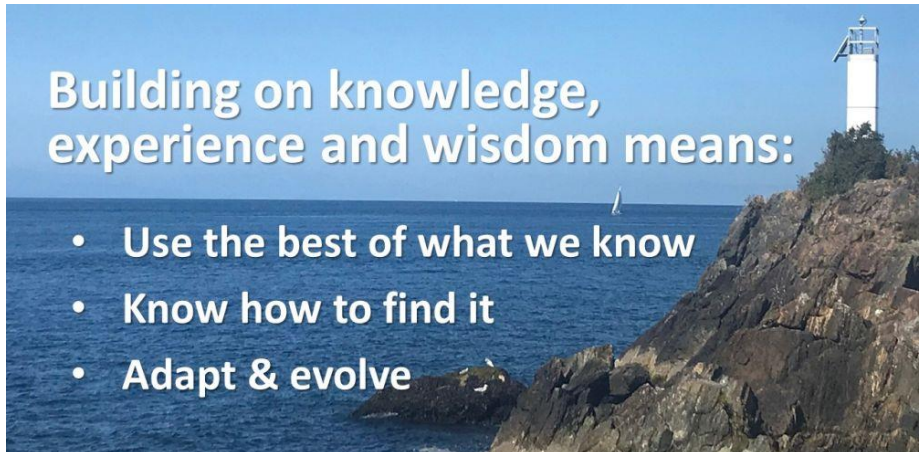
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This season, the Partnership will again feature "convening for action" champions in the local government and stewardship sectors. We share the stories of those who build on knowledge, experience and wisdom to advance Green Infrastructure solutions that achieve Water Sustainability outcomes.

We shine our Waterbucket eNews spotlight on the "story behind each story" because that is what readers are interested in. Through telling stories about champions and trailblazers, we underline that context and history do matter.



The voices of experience remind us that progress is measured in terms of decades, not months or years. **Realistic perspectives plus sustained commitment over achievable time horizons** would help communities manage expectations and make progress in successfully tackling issues and risks.

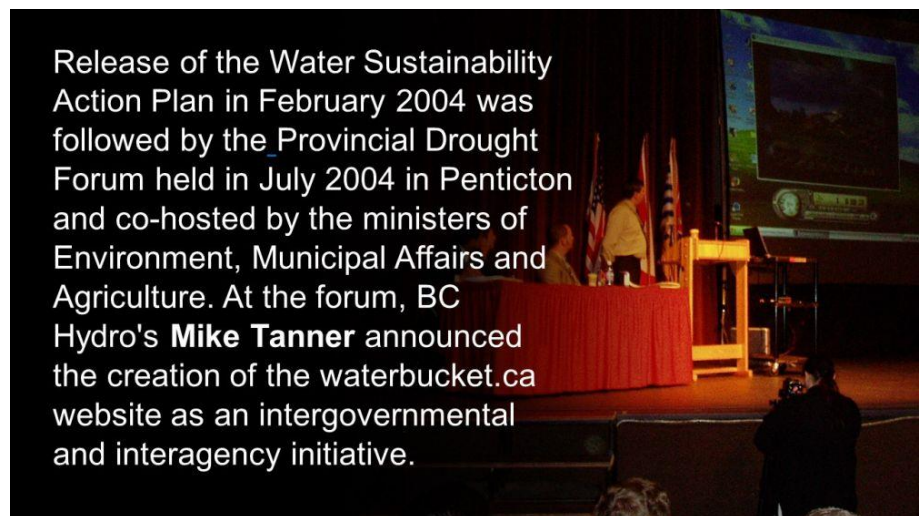


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## **Did you know that...**

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Continue reading to learn more.



## **Editor's Perspective by Kim A Stephens:** *How well are we doing? Now what?*



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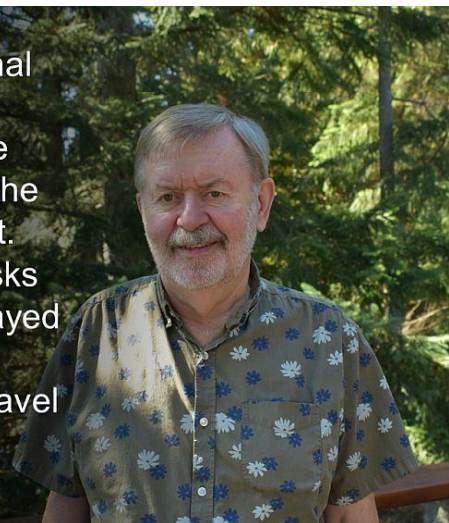
### **In 2023, history repeated itself in the Kelowna region**

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Mother Nature has an amazing sense of timing. On the 20th anniversary of the Kelowna fire evacuations, history repeated itself in August 2023 in the Kelowna region, especially in West Kelowna.

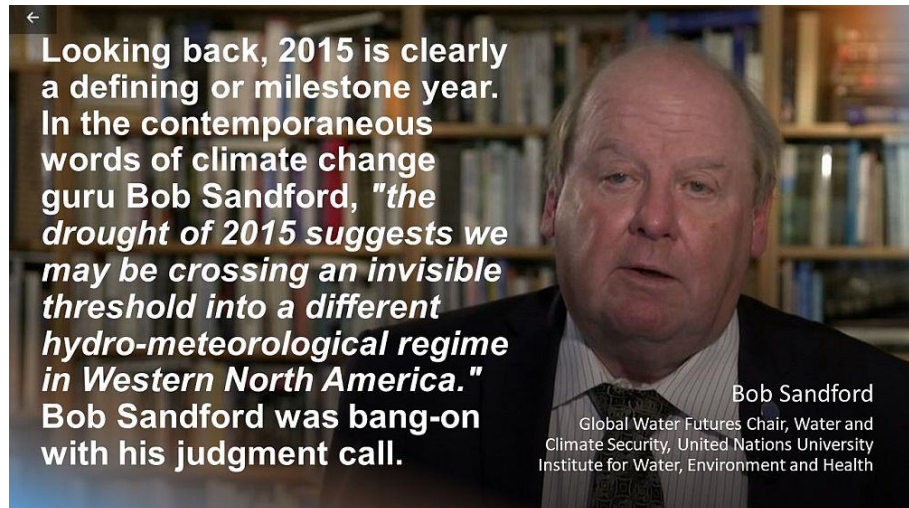
The fire situation was personal this year because our eldest daughter and her family were visiting from Kelowna when the news broke on a Friday night. Because of the escalating risks to life and property, they delayed their return to the Okanagan and remained with us until travel restrictions were lifted.

Kim Stephens



## Context and history do matter

We have had two decades to prepare for the obvious and the inevitable. 2003 was the first of a series of "teachable years", with the full onslaught of a changing climate hitting hard as of 2015.



***The Partnership path from 2003 through 2023:*** The Partnership for Water Sustainability in its present form was birthed in 2003. We seized the moment and moved into a vacuum. Timing is everything. At the beginning of 2003, the members of an intergovernmental committee comprised of three levels of government were in place. By April 2003, we were organized and we were primed for action.

In September 2003, mere weeks after the Kelowna fires resulted in evacuation of some 27,000 residents, **Lynn Kriwoken** of the Ministry of Environment asked me to spearhead development and implementation of the [Water Sustainability Action Plan for British Columbia](#), released in February 2004. Then came BC's first Drought Response Plan in June 2004.

This was followed by the Provincial Drought Forum held in July 2004 in Penticton and co-hosted by the ministers of Environment, Municipal Affairs and Agriculture. At the forum, BC Hydro's **Mike Tanner** announced the creation of the [waterbucket.ca](#) website as an intergovernmental and interagency initiative.

At our first inter-regional focus group session, held in Kelowna in November 2003, the vision and game plan for the [waterbucket.ca](#) website had crystalized. The Partnership embraced the model for storytelling that **Joanne deVries** pioneered with her FreshOutlook magazine in the 1990s.





*Members of the team in April 2005 when the Minister of Environment announced that waterbucket.ca was now LIVE. From left to right: Ron Smith, Lynn Kriwoken, Joanne deVries, Ray Fung and Mike Tanner.*

The rest is history, as they say. We embarked on a journey with a commitment to document our history on waterbucket.ca even as we created it through collaboration and partnerships. And why is this context important for our readers to know?

Well...because people learn from stories! Through the sharing of stories, we pass on an understanding of THE WHY and THE WHAT. Two decades later, you are reading Waterbucket eNews!

For more than two decades, the Partnership has been developing tools and resources and mentoring talent, while all the time growing the [Living Water Smart Network](#). The Partnership is all about the intergenerational mission and passing the baton to those who are receptive to embracing it.

Some of us have spent our careers working on solutions to *watershed, water and food security* issues and challenges.

Climate change is accelerating. There is no time to re-invent the wheel, fiddle, or go down cul-de-sacs. Understand how the past informs the future and build on that experience.



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## Now what do we do?

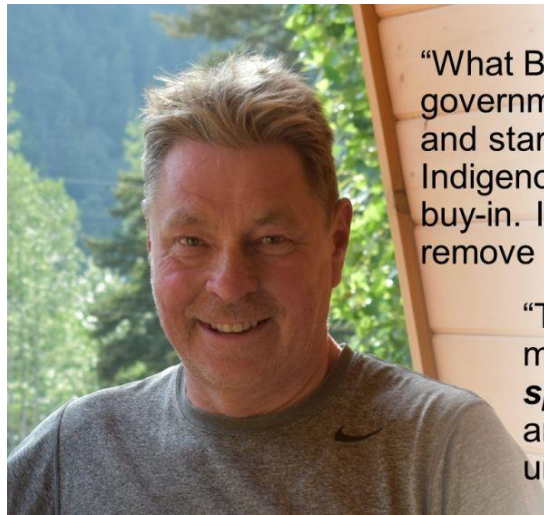
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In the weeks and months ahead, the editorial theme weaving through Waterbucket eNews stories is NOW WHAT DO WE DO.

ON SEPTEMBER 26, THE HEADLINE WILL BE:

**“Non-Indigenous people are afraid of saying the wrong thing, or breaking Indigenous cultural protocol, so they back away from meaningful dialogue out of FEAR,” states Michael Blackstock**

The Blue Ecology video documentary, which is titled *Watershed Moments 2023: A Pathway to Water Reconciliation and Resilience at the Local Scale*, seeds the idea that hope lies within the spheres of influence for local governments - whether they are Indigenous OR non-Indigenous.



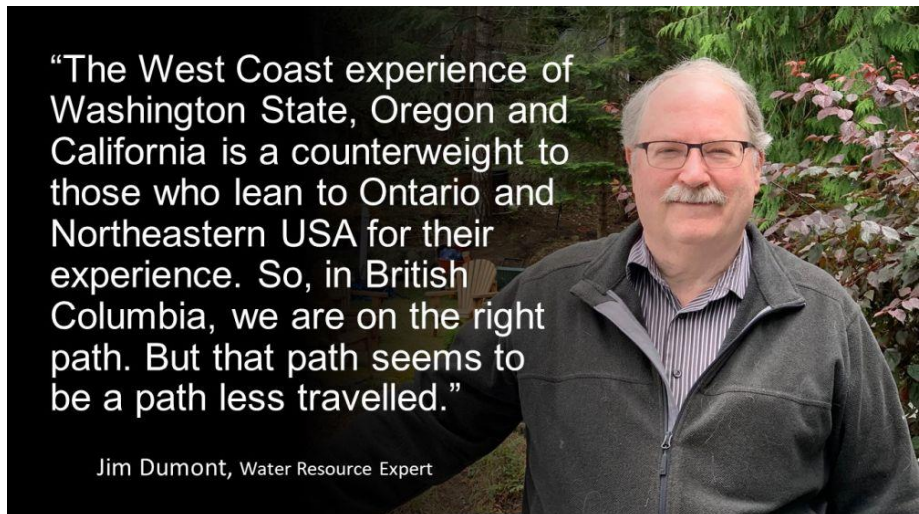
“What Blue Ecology offers local government is a foundation, and starting point, that has both Indigenous and non-Indigenous buy-in. I believe this will alone remove some of the fear.”

“Then, together, we can move towards the **hope spectrum** more easily and creatively. This is an underlying message.”

ON OCTOBER 3, THE HEADLINE WILL BE:

**“Why is British Columbia falling behind the West Coast states in regulating and managing rainwater?” is the question Jim Dumont asks**

While many advances have been made in managing rainwater on-site, BC communities are failing to utilize practices that directly benefit streams during droughts and floods. The needs of BC communities closely align with the other west coast areas that suffer from adverse stream flows.



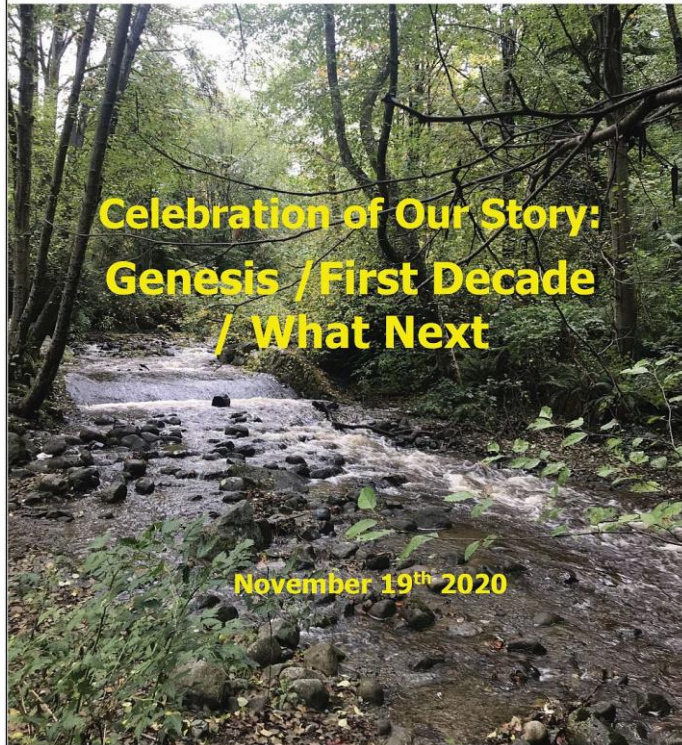
“The West Coast experience of Washington State, Oregon and California is a counterweight to those who lean to Ontario and Northeastern USA for their experience. So, in British Columbia, we are on the right path. But that path seems to be a path less travelled.”

Jim Dumont, Water Resource Expert





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TO LEARN MORE, VISIT:

<https://waterbucket.ca/about-us/>

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## About the Partnership for Water Sustainability in British Columbia

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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 inter-generational 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.

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