

ANNOUNCEMENT

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Convening for Action on Vancouver Island
Leadership in Water Sustainability



Green Infrastructure: New Water Balance Model supports *The New Business As Usual*

GAINING GROUND SUSTAINABLE URBAN DEVELOPMENT LEADERSHIP SUMMIT, Victoria - The Water Balance Model for British Columbia is a decision support tool that promotes rainwater management and 'green' development practices. It also underpins a water-centric approach to climate change adaptation. Web-based and public domain, the tool is available at www.waterbalance.ca

The Ministry of Agriculture and Lands provided \$160,000 and the Ministry of Community Services \$25,000 to integrate the Water Balance Model web interface and the QUALHYMO hydrologic engine. The City of Calgary also contributed \$10,000. The result is a pan-Canadian scenario modeling tool, because QUALHYMO was developed in the 1980s for the Ontario Ministry of Environment.

The web-based **Water Balance Model powered by QUALHYMO** is unique, bridges engineering and planning, links development sites to the stream and watershed, and enables local governments to establish science-based watershed targets. The model correlates green infrastructure effectiveness in protecting agricultural lowlands and stream health.

Liveable Communities in Balance with Ecology

The Water Balance Model was developed as an extension of *Stormwater Planning: A Guidebook for British Columbia*, published by the Province in 2002. The Guidebook set in motion a chain of outcomes that has resulted in British Columbia being recognized internationally as a leader in implementing a natural systems approach to rainwater management in the urban environment.



The "new Water Balance Model" underpins **Beyond the Guidebook: The New Business As Usual**, an initiative to further advance implementation of green infrastructure policies and practices throughout British Columbia. The desired outcome is to create liveable communities and protect stream health.

The Water Balance Model was developed by an inter-governmental partnership that includes three BC Ministries - Agriculture and Lands, Environment, and Community Services. The partnership also comprises numerous local governments, three federal agencies, and is now inter-provincial in scope. In addition, the Real Estate Foundation of British Columbia has been a major funder and collaborator.

"The Real Estate Foundation was an early supporter of the Water Balance Model because our mission and that of the inter-governmental partnership are in alignment," said Jack Hall, Chair of the Foundation's Board of Governors. "We both wish to advance water-centric planning and a Design with Nature way-of-thinking and acting. The desired outcome is liveable communities in balance with ecology."

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Vancouver Island is the pilot region for implementing *Beyond the Guidebook: The New Business As Usual*. The Real Estate Foundation, the Ministry of Environment, and the Ministry of Community Services are co-funding **CAVI - Convening for Action on Vancouver Island**. The shared vision is to move toward water sustainability by implementing green infrastructure policies and practices. This is a multi-year commitment by the funding agencies.



“CAVI is an innovative and precedent-setting approach to partnerships and collaboration,” said CAVI Chair John Finnie, General Manager Environmental Services with the Regional District of Nanaimo. “CAVI is bringing together those who plan and regulate land use (local government), those who build (developers) and those who provide the legislative framework (the Province).”

Through CAVI, Vancouver Island is the pilot for the **Learning Lunch Seminar Series**, a continuing education program for local government practitioners. “This program will build capacity to apply the *Water Balance Model* powered by *QUALHYMO*, and it will help make the transition to *The New Business As Usual*,” added CAVI Chair John Finnie.

The Cowichan Valley Regional District and City of Courtenay are the host local governments for series in the Spring and Fall, respectively. The Vancouver Island local governments that will be participating represent some 250,000 people. The Series is the first step in building a regional team approach so that there will be a common understanding and consistent messaging regarding *The New Business As Usual*.

“The understanding gained will enable practitioners to make informed land development decisions that meet multiple objectives, and result in Green Value,” noted Real Estate Foundation Chair Jack Hall.

“The new *Water Balance Model*, *Beyond the Guidebook: The New Business As Usual*, and CAVI together demonstrate what can be achieved through partnerships and collaboration, and illustrate how the green infrastructure mandate in the Throne Speech is being implemented on-the-ground,” concluded Ted van der Gulik (Ministry of Agriculture & Lands), Chair of the Inter-Governmental Partnership that developed the *Water Balance Model*.

THE WATER SUSTAINABILITY ACTION PLAN FOR BRITISH COLUMBIA provides the overarching framework for the *Water Balance Model for British Columbia*, *Beyond the Guidebook: The New Business As Usual*, the *Learning Lunch Seminar Series*, and *Convening for Action on Vancouver Island*. Developed in 2003-2004 by the Province and the Water Sustainability Committee of the British Columbia Water & Waste Association (BCWWA), the Action Plan has evolved into a comprehensive provincial program called *Convening for Action in British Columbia*. The BCWWA Water Sustainability Committee is delivering the *Convening for Action* program through a network of partnerships. The Green Infrastructure Partnership is also an element of both the Action Plan and CAVI.



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