



# Rainwater Management in a Watershed Sustainability Context

## Program Overview for Inter-Regional Educational Initiative



October 2012

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### Everyone Benefits!

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*The Partnership for Water Sustainability in British Columbia is helping the Province implement the Living Water Smart and Green Communities initiatives in the local government setting. Launched in 2008, these initiatives comprise plans, strategies, targets, actions and tools to reduce the 'water footprint' of BC communities. The Partnership is incorporated as a not-for-profit society.*

*The Georgia Basin bioregion is a hot-bed of progressive ideas and provincially significant initiatives. Regional districts and municipalities are advancing watershed-based strategies and programs for "integrating rainwater management at the site level with the watershed and stream" (see Figure 1):*

- *In 2012, the Partnership brought together four regional districts on Vancouver Island to align their efforts and implement a 'proof of approach' for an **Inter-Regional Education Initiative (IREI)**. These four regions represent 90% of the Vancouver Island population.*
- *The early success of the initiative creates opportunities for knowledge sharing and transfer on both sides of the Georgia Basin so that together everyone can go farther, more efficiently and effectively.*

*Collaboration among Vancouver Island local governments, Metro Vancouver, and member municipalities has grown steadily since 2007. The IREI provides a framework for consistent application of tools and understanding on both sides of the Georgia Basin. Everyone benefits from sharing information and experiences.*



Kim A. Stephens, MEng, PEng,  
Executive Director  
Partnership for Water Sustainability in BC  
October 2012



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### COLLABORATIVE INITIATIVES WILL HELP LOCAL GOVERNMENTS BETTER DELIVER ON REGULATORY OBJECTIVES AND COMPLIANCE

- Collaboration is the pathway to a consistent approach to implementation and integration of water sustainability and green infrastructure policies and practices within and between regions.
- Yet there is no formal mechanism to enable or facilitate inter-regional collaboration. The Partnership fills this gap.
- At the heart of the IREI is 'Beyond the Guidebook', an ongoing initiative to provide local governments with the tools and understanding necessary to integrate the Site with the Watershed and the Stream.
- The Beyond the Guidebook initiative is building on the technical foundation created a decade ago when the Province and Environment Canada jointly released **Stormwater Planning: A Guidebook for British Columbia**. The Partnership for Water Sustainability is:
  - the steward for the Guidebook; and
  - leading the "Beyond the Guidebook" initiative;
- Tools developed through inter-governmental partnerships include the Water Balance Model, the waterbucket.ca website, and the Water Conservation Calculator.
- The IREI will help all local governments bridge the 'implementation and integration' gap.
- The IREI comprises these inter-connected modules:
  - Water Balance Model Training Workshops
  - A Course on Watershed Blueprints
  - Learning Lunch Seminars & Series
  - Watershed Blueprint Case Profiles
  - Primers in the Beyond the Guidebook Series
- These program modules are designed to provide a consistent framework for knowledge-sharing within a region and between regions. There is ample flexibility to adapt within the framework to incorporate local objectives, learning outcomes, and examples.
- To demonstrate how to make inter-regional collaboration tangible, the Partnership implemented a 'proof of approach' on Vancouver Island in the first half of 2012.
- On May 30<sup>th</sup>, the Partnership applied for a Capacity Building Grant under the Gas Tax Agreement. To be successful, an application must demonstrate that the initiative supports a regional approach, is built around partnerships, and is replicable and/or transferable provincially. Because four regional districts are IREI partners, we have already met this test. Our application includes this statement:

*"The Ministry looks forward to aligning efforts with the Partnership (for Water Sustainability) in three regions — Vancouver Island, Lower Mainland and the Okanagan — to further advance implementation of the "Beyond the Guidebook" initiative; and provide communities with the tools and knowledge to protect and/or restore watershed health," stated Cairine MacDonald, Deputy Minister of Environment in a September 2012 announcement.*

*"The Ministry's renewed emphasis on the rainwater management component of Liquid Waste Management Plans has created an opportunity to demonstrate how to integrate regulatory compliance and collaboration."*

**Georgia Basin Vision:** *The Partnership's ultimate objective is to formalize participation of the Metro Vancouver region so that the initiative morphs into the "Georgia Basin Inter-Regional Education Initiative".*

- An announcement by UBCM is expected sometime during the November-December period.

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Inter-Regional Education Initiative

Figure 1

### Explanatory Notes – Provincial Significance

1. The Province intervened in the Comox Valley to both create a new regional district and mandate regional plans. The *Comox Valley Sustainability Strategy* and *Comox Valley Regional Growth Strategy* provide the planning framework for implementing **An Integrated Watershed Approach to Settlement**.
2. The Nanaimo Region's **Drinking Water & Watershed Protection Plan** created a drinking water and watershed protection service area with taxation authority in the region's electoral areas. Because the scope has been expanded to include the member municipalities, this means the plan has more of a regional function.
3. The **Cowichan Basin Water Management Plan** is a provincial case study for watershed governance changes being contemplated as part of *Water Act Modernization*.
4. In the Capital Region, the Bowker Creek Watershed Blueprint and District of Sooke Rainwater Management Plan are demonstration initiatives for **Integrated Watershed Management**. Both are founded on partnerships that have enabled community groups and municipal staffs to coalesce around a shared vision: *What do we want this watershed to look like in 100 years, and what steps will we take to get there?*
5. Metro Vancouver's **Integrated Liquid Waste & Resource Management Plan** established the framework for moving beyond regulatory compliance to transitioning the region to an approach where management of liquid discharges and rainwater resources is planned and implemented within a broader, sustainability framework.