



PROGRESS REPORT TO PARTNERS	
DATE:	March 2014
TO:	Cowichan Valley Regional District
FROM:	Kim A Stephens, M.Eng., P.Eng., Executive Director
RE:	INTER-REGIONAL COLLABORATION FOR WATERSHED SUSTAINABILITY

SCOPE:

The *Inter-Regional Education Initiative* supports implementation of integrated and watershed-based community planning processes on the east coast of Vancouver Island and in the Lower Mainland. A desired outcome of inter-regional collaboration is accelerated implementation of affordable and effective watershed sustainability and green infrastructure practices. The purpose of this progress report is to:

1. thank the Cowichan Valley Regional District for its support of inter-regional collaboration;
2. inform the Cowichan Valley Regional District about the scope of the 2014 Work Plan; and
3. foreshadow the 2014 deliverable and its anticipated application in the years ahead.

BACKGROUND:

In 2012, the Partnership for Water Sustainability in British Columbia asked the Boards of five regional districts – namely Capital, Cowichan Valley, Nanaimo, Comox Valley and Metro Vancouver – to endorse local government collaboration under the umbrella of the *Inter-Regional Education Initiative (IREI)*; and furthermore, to support a grant application to UBCM for a “Gas Tax Fund Capacity-Building Grant”.

The grant application was not successful. Nevertheless, the partners carried on and are now in Year 3 of inter-regional collaboration. The Province has provided funding for the Partnership’s facilitating role.

IMPLEMENTATION:

A goal of inter-regional collaboration is to help everyone go farther, more efficiently and effectively.

In 2012, each region hosted a ‘sharing and learning’ event to initiate the IREI program. Year 1 constituted the ‘proof-of-approach’ for aligning efforts and leveraging more with the same resources.

In 2013, a group of local government champions representing the five geographic regions convened as an inter-regional leadership team and committed to working together to achieve this goal: **Restore and/or protect stream and watershed health**. Alignment with provincial policies is a critical success factor.

In 2014, the partner regions are hosting a series of Inter-Regional Collaboration Sessions. This process aligns with each region’s priorities and individual work plans. Regions will be sharing and learning from each other. The deliverable is a workbook that may be used by local governments as a guidance document to adjust actions, inform watershed planning, and create a legacy (i.e. healthy watersheds and streams). To learn more, refer to ATTACHMENT #1 for details of the 2014 Work Plan.

Inter-Regional Collaboration in the Georgia Basin

Attachment #1 - Overview of 2014 Work Plan & Collaboration Deliverable

<p>WHY</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Watershed/stream health and rainwater/stormwater management are priorities for communities on the east coast of Vancouver Island and in the Lower Mainland region ▶ Communities have been struggling with the question of how best to move forward on the Watershed Health issue, particularly in light of a changing climate and financial drivers to provide higher levels-of-service at reduced levels-of-cost ▶ Inter-regional collaboration is helping each region understand what the other regions are doing, what works and what does not ▶ Collaboration will help everyone better deliver on regulatory requirements, especially for the watershed/rainwater component of Liquid Waste Management Plans (LWMPs)
<p>WHAT</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ The collaborating regions view the Watershed Health issue through complementary lenses that together form a complete picture ▶ Each region has something unique to contribute to the mix: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Metro Vancouver – <i>watershed plan effectiveness</i> 2. Capital Region – <i>water quality assessment</i> 3. Nanaimo Region - <i>partnerships</i> 4. Cowichan Valley – <i>climate change adaptation</i> 5. Comox Valley – <i>sustainable service delivery</i> ▶ The inter-regional deliverable is a workbook on application of performance monitoring approaches that are affordable, effective and adaptive
<p>SO WHAT</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ The vision is that collaboration would result in implementation of standards of practice that are affordable and effective in maintaining healthy watersheds and streams ▶ The mantra for inter-regional collaboration is framed in these terms: <i>Through sharing and learning, ensure that where we are going is indeed the right way</i>
<p>NOW WHAT</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Organize a series of Inter-Regional Collaboration Sessions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Springboard Session – January 23 (hosted by the Province in Victoria) □ Capital Region – March 28 (in Victoria) □ Nanaimo Region – April 29 (in Nanaimo) □ Cowichan Valley – May 27 (in Ladysmith) □ Comox Valley – June 25 (in Courtenay) ▶ At each regional session, inform and educate the local audience about necessary actions to fulfil regulatory objectives, commitments and requirements in the host region ▶ Compile the set of session outcomes in a workbook that provides guidance ▶ Report out in early 2015
<p>THEN WHAT</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ The workbook would inform anyone involved in a watershed health monitoring process ▶ The workbook would be the starting point for sharing, learning and adapting over time ▶ The workbook may be used by local governments to adjust actions, inform community and watershed planning, and create a legacy (i.e. healthy watersheds & streams)