

What do we want this place to look like in 50 years?

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The Partnership on Vancouver Island -
Leadership in Water Sustainability
CAVI Past-Chair (2011-2016)

Vancouver Island is a hot-bed of progressive ideas. Regional districts along the east coast of the island are advancing watershed-based strategies and programs.

Their journeys are documented in *Beyond the Guidebook 2015*, released last November by the Partnership for Water Sustainability. Each region recognizes the importance of instilling a land ethic that respects water. The outcome would be 'economy, ecology and settlement in balance'.

Looking back, a bold experiment

was launched at the Water in the City Conference held in Victoria in September 2006.

Transformational in scope, and branded as CAVI-Convening for Action on Vancouver Island: Leadership in Water Sustainability, the initiative was co-funded by two provincial ministries (Environment; Community Development) and the Real Estate Foundation of BC. Over the past decade, the CAVI model has demonstrated what can be accomplished through collaboration, partnerships, celebration and a regional team approach.

The stage is now set for achieving 'economy, ecology and settlement in balance'.

CAVI is a prototype for a water-

centric approach guided by inter-generational commitment to action. It will take time and therefore requires perseverance. Simply put, it is a long distance relay race. The Partnership mission is to inspire successive generations of champions to carry the baton. The Vancouver Island experience over the past decade has attracted international attention – for example, the CAVI prototype has been the subject of keynote addresses at forums in the United States and Australia.

The VI 2065 Vision

The first decade was the 'proof of approach' for a different way of doing business.

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In Decade #2 of a multi-decade journey, the CAVI legacy will live on through VI 2065, acronym for the Vancouver Island 2065 initiative.

Beyond the Guidebook 2015 introduced the paradigm that watersheds are infrastructure assets.

They need to be managed and protected as such.

By expanding understanding of and support for Sustainable Watershed Systems, through Asset Management paradigm, VI 2065 would help set a course so that Vancouver Island would achieve a water-resilient future over the next 50 years – which is only two generations (children and grand-children).

"The future of Vancouver Island calls for 'cathedral thinking' to create an inter-generational vision that is inspirational, pragmatic, and based on a strong foundation," states Eric Bonham, CAVI founding member and inspirational speaker.

"The VI2065 initiative envisions a Vancouver Island based on long-term sustainability and water resiliency models that involve innovative partnerships. The results guide us towards effective land and water management practices."

Vancouver Island is a Model for Canada

Eva Kras - visionary, scholar, traveler and author of *THE BLOCK-AGE - Rethinking Organizational Principles for the 21st Century* - makes this observation:

"We need both immediate-term pragmatism and visionary dedication to sustainability if we are to

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preserve our capacity for positive and permanent regional vitality. Break-throughs result when we take leaps of faith and apply our pragmatic skills to the 'big picture'. This is why I am so impressed by the collaboration that is gathering momentum on Vancouver Island."

"Vancouver Island has a huge possibility, and responsibility, to form a type of model that communities in Canada can look to for ideas, related especially to the concept of collaboration, even though the actual implementation will differ by region," emphasizes Eva Kras.

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Water defines communities.

Water resource practitioners and land use have long-lasting consequences.

While there are still some major water resources issues yet to be resolved, the Comox Valley, as one collaborative region, has demonstrated the benefits of cooperative initiatives. Looking beyond our (man-made) borders can only assist in reaching a long-term vision for 'economy, ecology and settlement in balance'

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