



ONLINE SURVEY > Parksville 2019 Symposium started strong with Dave Derrick stream restoration workshop and finished strong with Storm Cunningham presentation on restorative development; remarkable 40% response rate by delegates confirmed that the key educational objectives were fulfilled

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Note to Reader:

The City of Parksville was the setting for the second in the annual Vancouver Island symposium series on water stewardship in a changing climate. Close to 200 delegates attended this 3-day event. They came from far and wide – from Sooke at the southern tip of Vancouver Island to the small town of Port McNeil on the northeast coast; from Metro Vancouver on the mainland east to the province of Alberta; and from Washington State, Virginia and Mississippi in the United States.

*Parksville 2019 comprised a field day followed by a 2-day symposium. The over-arching theme was **Improving Where We Live Through Restorative Development**. Dave Derrick, charismatic stream restoration innovator, was the star attraction for the field day. The symposium headliner was Storm Cunningham, author of [The Restoration Economy](#), and two other books on how to decrease our destructive footprint while at the same time increasing our restorative footprint.*

Parksville 2019 was an ambitious undertaking. At the conclusion of the event, the Parksville 2019 Organizing Committee conducted an online survey. This provided both quantitative and qualitative feedback on how well Parksville 2019 had achieved the stated educational objectives.

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Key Educational Objectives

The Parksville 2019 Organizing Committee set out to achieve three objectives: attract an audience balanced across sectors; demonstrate the power of collaboration between the stewardship sector and local governments; and create an environment for sharing and cross-fertilizing experiences. Mission accomplished!

Putting the Event in Context:



"Parksville 2019 demonstrated that a group of close to 200 biologists, planners, engineers, streamkeepers, politicians, administrators, students and others, all with different backgrounds and responsibilities, can share a common learning experience and agree on strategies for water and land stewardship, and stream restoration. Truly a magical experience. **The stage has been set for more and better things to come,**" stated John Finnie, Chair of the Organizing Committee.



“The core message was the power of thoughtful and constructive collaboration. It is one thing getting together to share ideas. It is quite another when there is a genuine desire to truly listen to each other, and through commitment, reach for the common good and, as a result, change how we do business together. This was the strength of the Symposium – the inter-generational and inter-discipline exchange that took place,” added Eric Bonham, a former Director in two provincial ministries – Environment and Municipal Affairs. In the 1990s, Eric oversaw the Urban Salmon Habitat Program (USHP).

An Inspirational Experience – Quotable Quotes:



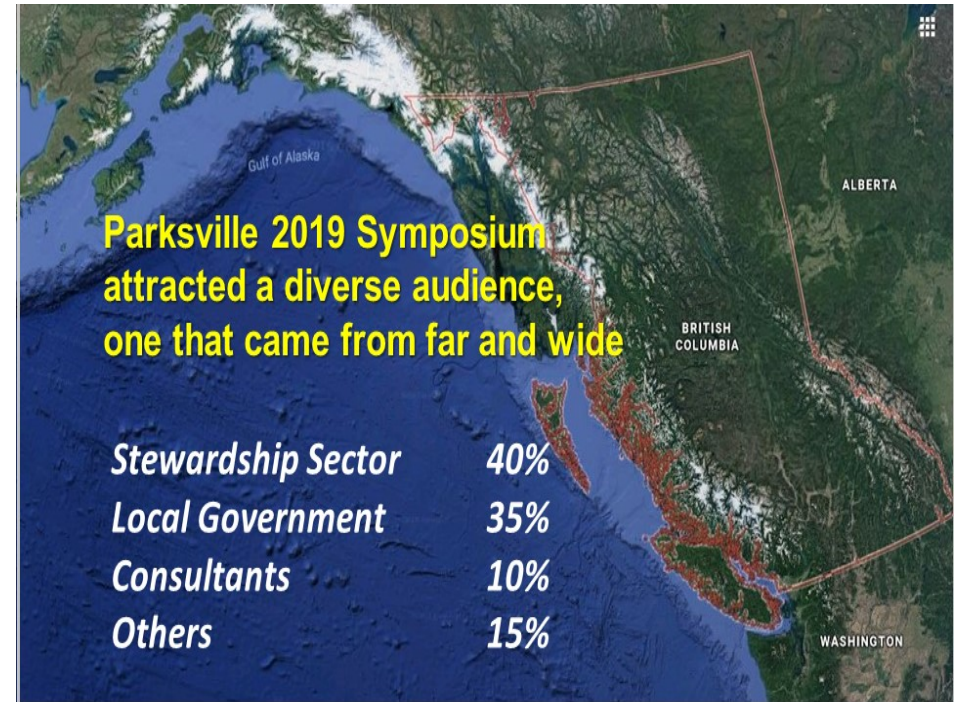
“Thank you so much for the immense amount of work you do to protect ecosystem services and teach us all about taking responsibility. The Vancouver Island symposium on water stewardship was so inspiring and informative. It was a wonderful experience. I left Parksville feeling hopeful. Thanks for inspiring us. It was a wonderful conference. Sincere gratitude,” stated Councillor Laura Dupont, City of Port Coquitlam.

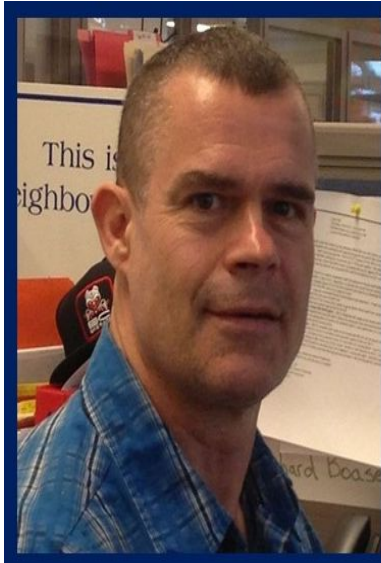


“I just wanted to say thanks to you and everyone behind the great symposium! Great job!! It was an exciting few days, and I left feeling inspired and even somewhat empowered about finding ways to protect water. The importance of ecological services really hit home for me. There is lots of great work happening out there – thanks to all the organizers for bringing it all together,” added Laura Beckett, Municipal Planner & Deputy Approving Officer, District of Highlands.

Online Survey of Delegates:

The survey targeted approximately 150 registered delegates. The response rate was 40%. Respondents spent an average of almost 14 minutes answering the set of questions, indicating that the responses were indeed thoughtful. Quantitative results are presented below as pie-charts. Accompanying “quotable comments” provide a flavour of how delegates viewed the sharing and learning experience. *To access the survey, click on [Parksville Water Stewardship Symposium 2019 – Post Event Survey](#).*

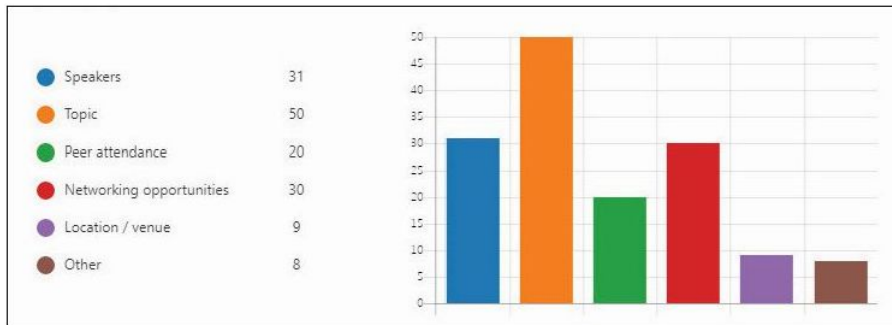




North Vancouver District's Richard Boase returned as symposium moderator

Richard Boase brings three ingredients to the role of moderator: passion, enthusiasm and a sense of humour.

Which factors influenced your decision to attend this event?



Quotable Comments:

- "Understanding what leading municipalities are doing"
- "Show moral support for those who went to the effort to put on the event"
- "Attended and enjoyed the Nanaimo 2018 symposium"
- "Mix of government, stewardship, consultants"
- "Kim Stephens make so much sense :)"

How did you hear about this event?



How would you rate this event?



Two-thirds of respondents rated Parkville 2019 as **EXCELLENT**. The extremely large sample size (40%) results in a high degree of confidence that the finding is solid and is truly representative of delegates as a whole.

Overall, were you satisfied with the content and organization for this event?



The above summary shows that Parkville 2019 **met or exceeded the expectations of 95% of the delegates** who responded to the survey. There were a mere three outliers whose expectations were either partially met or not met. This is not statistically significant.

Quotable Comments – Three Outliers:

Feedback comments provided by the three outliers are reproduced below. Their comments help provide context regarding their expectations when compared to the stated educational objectives for Parksville 2019. The relevance and/or significance of their comments is left for the reader to judge. It is material that, in the very next question, the delegate who provided the *elephant in the room* perspective chose ABSOLUTELY to describe the usefulness to them of Parksville 2019.

- “The highlight for me was hearing Storm Cunningham – however, I was disappointed that this headliner was featured outside of the regular conference hours. Therefore, I had to miss his talk” (comment by one of only two delegates who were only Somewhat Satisfied)
- “The elephant in the room is still not making it to the podium. We cannot continue to have unending economic growth (facilitated by population growth and increasing consumption) and water sustainability. The scientific literature is clear on this. One audience member asked a question about carrying capacity and the panel shunned that question like a hot potato yet that was the most important question of the symposium. The next day, 3 people at my table alone said that they agreed that carrying capacity was a critical factor if not the limiting factor. Even if we can make great strides in creekshed health through the water balance approach (and if anybody could achieve this, it would be this group) continued economic growth will drive climate change and biodiversity loss in an exponential fashion. All indicators are that climate change is going to be a little bit more significant than wetter winters and drier summers and we are already in the 6th mass extinction. There is no restoration technique for extinction short of geologic time. This is why Storm Cunningham’s graph showing that economic growth can continue as long as we have a restorative footprint is incorrect. That is inaccurate and bad information being presented at a what is supposed to be a science and “anti-vooodoo” conference.” (comment by the other Somewhat Satisfied delegate)
- “Didn’t include speaker who could speak about value of maintaining healthy watershed ecosystems” (comment by the only delegate who was Not Really Satisfied)

The above outliers reaffirm that one will never satisfy everyone. Therefore, what is paramount is the consensus of the room. And the consensus was that Parksville 2019 was inspirational. There seems to be little doubt on that score. The many high moments predominated over the few soft moments.

Quotable Comments – What Some Delegates Thought Could Have Been Different:

When asked to elaborate on what aspects of the content and organization were less than satisfying, a dozen delegates offered these reflections:

- “It never was clear as to Storm’s role”
- “My only concern was sitting in the dark room for so long at a stretch”
- “My only thought is that my preference is to end the day on time”
- “A little long.....by end of the second day”
- “I would have liked to hear more case histories. Other water users, especially agriculture, got little attention”
- “Needed a little bit more networking time”
- “Too little time for networking because break times and lunch were cut short”
- “I think last year’s Nanaimo symposium had stronger speakers with better presentation slides (or perhaps because the event was novel for me). There were definitely more women speakers last year, a better reflection of who’s involved working in this field and of audience composition. To be perfectly honest, there were far too many ‘middle-aged white men’. Many were the same as last year and some had very poor slides (way too much text; poorly organized). It’s important to mentor the up and coming, allowing others to take the spotlight”
- “Would like more time to hear more from audience and presenters rather than several speeches from hosts”

- “(The panel sessions) tried to cover too much, too many presentations, some sections went past the program time limits: not fond of the table/seating floor plan (half the audience effectively has their back to the presenters)”
- “More time needed. Speakers (in the two panel sessions were) given 5 minutes had to rush through presentations, group activity also needed more time”
- “My only issue was that the bun throwing (in the Day One Panel session) felt quite disrespectful and unnecessary. Perhaps another way of keeping folks on time could be considered”

Reflections by the Parksville 2019 Organizing Committee about the Panel & Town-Hall sessions:

Further to the last three points above, and from the perspective of the Committee, the Panel & Town-Hall sessions were the one part of the program where some improvement could be made in future, especially when contrasted with past successes in energizing an audience through town-hall interaction.

The Committee adopted the IGNITE format for the panel sessions. When done right, the Ignite format creates a fast and fun set of presentations. Each speaker is allowed 5 minutes and must use no more than 20 slides, with each slide advancing automatically after 15 seconds. This format is designed to force speakers to get to the point, fast.

Yes, these sessions did produce stimulating discussions. However, they just did not light a fire in audience response in the way the Committee had hoped that it would. This was attributable to two factors, and both revolve around the matter of “group dynamics”. First, and with the advantage of hindsight, the panelists would have benefited greatly from a team rehearsal in order to streamline the individual messaging so that everyone would stay within their 5-minute allotments. Secondly, the large size of the audience did create a facilitation challenge, in particular drawing out those who normally do not put up their hands.

Was this event useful to you?



Three-quarters of respondents chose **ABSOLUTELY** to encapsulate the usefulness to them as a result of what they learned by attending Parksville 2019.

Quotable Comments:

Only five delegates chose to provide comments on whether or not the 3-days at Parksville 2019 was a useful way for them to spend their time. As can be seen below, the first two are positive comments, the third is a sidebar comment, and the last two are a commentary on the delegate frame-of-reference.

- “Good for meeting people, networking and some interesting discussion”
- “Getting an in-depth look of what leading municipalities are doing; feedback from leading scientist/practitioners; issues in water sustainability; new perspectives in addressing this complex problem”

- *“Not that it is your fault but I was really disappointed in the absence of lots of nearby local government officials”* – editor’s note: this is a reference to City of Parksville; in contrast, four members of the Regional District of Nanaimo Board did attend.
- *“Some things on day one were a little beyond my understanding of flow functioning, etc”*
- *“Was very Island-centric dealing with Vancouver Island issues; hard to transform to Metro Vancouver and lower mainland issues”*

Quotable Comments – The most important thing learned at Parksville 2019:

The responses listed below are revealing because they are specific in capturing what resonated with individual delegates. Three responses are highlighted because they stand out as defining “quotable quotes”.

- ***“Everything learned was valuable and complementary, from Dave Derrick to Storm Cunningham and all the presenters in between, there wasn’t one presentation I did not learn something from”*** – a defining comment!
- *“Collaboration between all stakeholders on watershed management; Look for long-term solutions”*
- *“The successes on island creeks”*
- *“Stream Stewardship”*
- *“The current picture of water concern...a long way to go but we appear to be moving in the right direction”*
- *“All the pieces required to set up for a successful restoration project and how to engage stakeholders in a way that is respectful and engaging”*
- *“The importance of being with like minded people and to start where you are. Do what you can, with what you have, where you are”*
- *“The evolution of local government and stewardship practitioners to sharing joint perspectives about the value of ecological services”*
- *“Water likes to go down hill as it used to”*
- *“We need to create the change needed by engaging governmental agencies; hydrology and ecology are connected; water stewardship on Vancouver Island is alive and well”*
- *“Restorative Land Development”*
- *“What other districts are doing in restoration”*
- *“Details on RDN’s drinking water and watershed action plan update”*
- *“I was delighted to hear Tim Pringle’s EAP presentation. I also was glad to hear Jody Watson’s Bowker Creek up date”*
- *“Local successes”*
- *“Needed more info about protecting watersheds”*
- *“Validating the role of stewards”*
- *“Learning about what is possible”*
- *“Extent of work being done in the area”*
- ***“The Bowker Creek presentation was inspiring. I liked that they developed a broad vision and a plan, which became the go-to for any other planning and development events or opportunities that arose”*** – a defining comment
- *“That progress is being made and cooperation between government and stewardship groups is growing”*
- *“Ecological services are not an add-on; they are a core service”* – Marvin Kamenz
- *“Taxing for a water service that does not involve pipes, etc. For example, managing the ecological services of natural water absorption (i.e. drainage) and private wells”*
- *“Process is validated”*
- *“Examples of watershed stewardship”*
- *“Organizing streamkeepers around creeksheds and how that fits into the bigger picture of drought and stormwater management in my area”*
- *“Need for community and local government engagement”*
- *“How different groups can get together and make a difference”*
- *“Really interesting to see what other regions are doing. Also thought the perspectives of Storm Cunningham were very relevant and inspiring”*

- *“Many like minded and dedicated people at all levels”*
- *“The opportunity in restoration and the importance of process”*
- *“How we are damaging our most valuable resource – water; and some ideas to protect it moving forward”*
- *“Dave Derricks in class portion of the workshop has some practical techniques for stream work. This is directly transferable to my work”*
- *“Respecting the scientific process (collecting robust high-quality data) but then ensuring it’s getting used widely (by feeding into the provincial database), combined with community (stewardship sector/citizen scientists) to keep it real and relevant. Also, naming the necessary Precautionary Approach because we only ever see or know in part – ecosystems are more complicated than we think and than we know HOW to think! Hydrology is the key to ecosystem services and more attention needs to be given to interflow. The Ecological Accounting Process needs to be adopted by all levels of government and now!”*
- *“Zinc and copper runoff from traffic are the dangers to fish”*
- *“Seeing the successes/unsuccesses with water stewardship. Finding common interests / agendas through listening, collaborating, and understand the connections through water”*
- *“Peer networking”*
- *“Importance of influencing politicians”*
- *“Work collaboratively with different levels of government, clear communication is essential, don’t lose hope despite serious setbacks and keep on doing the hard work of hope”*
- *“So many good examples of ecological restoration give me hope”*
- *“I’m a biologist, not an engineer and I didn’t realize that stormwater management calculations are currently based on surface flows only. That was really helpful to me”*
- *“Examples and case stories of what is happening now”*
- *“The stewards of British Columbia are very interested in collectively raising their ability to meaningfully conduct citizen science”*
- *“I gained a better understanding about the interactions between surface water and groundwater (one water) and how we need to address this connectivity (or current lack of connectivity). I feel impassioned and empowered to address the issue of the impermeability of our cityscapes.”*
- *“That restoration is about more than just natural systems”*
- *“The Town of Comox changed direction in mid-project because of the EAP work by Tim Pringle”*
- ***“It always comes down to communication and collaboration. Local Governments are rarely in complete control of the land or have all of the resources to make change. Partnerships are crucial. Also, watershed restoration is a long game that can take place incrementally over a very long period of time. Each increment should be measured as success, not just the final outcome”*** – a defining comment
- *“Reconnecting hydrology to ecology – Ecological Accounting Process, Perseverance – long game”*
- *“How people are working together to move these initiatives forward”*
- *“It was more about Inspired Actions such as the Restorative Footprint and other REs; actions/Programs by the RDs (Nanaimo, Comox and Cowichan), together with other municipalities; the long-understood Watershed Management principle put into practice, and the incredible 100 year actionable vision for Bowker Creek, the super inspiring Storm Cunningham and Julie Pisani. Everything Great!”*
- *“There are real examples of some of the suggested prescriptions for watershed improvements – we need to have them found and highlighted for those who wish to attend”*
- *“How groups are working together to advance the agenda/what is happening in the various regions in BC/some important technical aspects of water flow and treatment”*
- *“Attend more of these events to connect with others, build partnerships to move towards a better future”*
- *“The amount of ecological restoration that is occurring on Vancouver Island is very encouraging”*
- *“Loved Dave Derrick’s talks”*
- *“Vision, mission, strategies, action plan, Partnerships and collaboration all are needed”*
- *“More about the general workings of a river”*
- *“Networking and partnering”*
- *“Dave Derrick’s methods to restore a stream”*
- ***“I learned important information regarding what others are doing about issues that we are having in our own local watersheds and how to present information regarding our water quality. It was especially***

exciting to have the very people who can help us right there at the symposium and how willing they were to follow up with us – a defining comment

From the perspective of planning the third in the Vancouver Island Water Stewardship Symposium Series, a logical next step in evaluating these responses would be to group them into themes.

Will this knowledge help you advance stewardship activities and/or water sustainability actions in your watershed(s)?



The above summary shows that **93% of the delegates** believe they left Parksville 2019 with knowledge that will help them. Furthermore, roughly two-thirds responded ABSOLUTELY. Viewed from the perspective of the Parksville 2019 Organizing Committee, this is one more measure of the ringing endorsement that the three educational objectives were fulfilled.

Quotable Comments:

When asked to describe how this knowledge will help them, delegates responded with comments, observations and reflections as follows:

- *“I am a new streamkeeper and attending the Symposium for the second year really helps to inform me about how to move forward with restoration and remediation and to not lose hope for positive changes from municipal, regional, provincial and federal jurisdictions”* – a defining comment
- *“Data-base research and promotion of scientific collaboration (biologists, geoscientists, hydrologists) on watershed studies”*
- *“Helpful to know about existing or proposed strategies and partnerships”*
- *“Natural Assets are an important part of our municipal infrastructure. This significantly helps people understand their vital role in our communities”*
- *“I gained a number of insights on how to move local drainage concerns/ issues forward. It will still be difficult but I have a new confidence that it can be done”*
- *“My current work position is in pipes and pumps style infrastructure – the lens of Green Infrastructure and success stories that were discussed, I can share with my colleagues and hopefully create momentum in our organization!”*
- *“I am going to start with a small restoration in a stream beside my house. It had renewed my energy to stay involved with the stewardship groups I am already involved with”*
- *“It will help me refine and focus messages to stewardship and local government audiences about successful strategies for management of environmental assets (ecological services)”*
- *“By understanding some of the mechanics and examples of stream restoration, I feel more confident about relaying information and have a meaningful conversation about the importance of what happens on land affects what happens to streams. There is hope that we can save what we have!”*
- *“It will assist in Land Use Planning”*

- *“A model to look to for ideas on what might work/not work, engagement activities, and logistics around collecting and using monitoring data in a useful way”*
- *“Mostly the cumulative effect of the two days inspires me to keep on working on my creek. There is always more to do, but it is good to get a boost every once in a while”*
- *“Educate senior management on the importance of community stewardship in our every day activities”*
- *“Further participating in the RDN’s review; conveying highlights to other citizen groups and hopefully to local government elected officials as well”*
- *“Again, from learning to look at a waterway differently from Dave Derrick; to learning more about strategy and processes from Storm Cunningham; every presentation and conversation taught or expanded my knowledge in some way”* – a defining comment
- *“Networking allowed me to make contacts with relevant people”*
- *“I will be discussing with our stewardship group the benefits of more focus, planning and strategic thinking in how we approach activities in the watershed”*
- *“Using other examples and precedents of success set by companion stewardship groups and governments we can encourage communication in the watersheds where communication is not so great”*
- *“Really helping keep a focus on collaboration and partnership. It will be important to define the relationships and understand the roles of stewards, local governments, consultants, etc for watershed stewardship. For example, the importance of front-end knowledge for projects and the limitations of time for grant money means we can’t properly analysis and understand the area before we move in on it. Instead, stewardship groups are incredibly important knowledge keepers for their on-going role and need to be supported on continuous monitoring and maintenance”*
- *“Using what other communities (RD Nanaimo and RD Cowichan Valley) are doing with respect to acquiring the resources (taxing) to manage the ecological services”*
- *“The practical techniques that I learned at this conference can be applied to projects in my neighbourhood. I will look at streams differently now that I have a better understanding of how they function and move over time”* – a defining comment
- *“Reinforces the importance of peer to peer support and collaboration”*
- *“I will be able to use this information in project work”*
- *“Got a lot of useful tools, tips and language. I am looking forward to a copy of the presentation materials, so I can use some of the slides on my constituency website”*
- *“I will be discussing the symposium highlights with our local stream group”*
- *“Developing a water conservation strategy right now so got lots of ideas from other regions to think about”*
- *“I’ll be more likely to reach out to other stream stewards for help in future”*
- *“I thought the RDN exercise around the 10 year plan was well done”*
- *“All small creeks are faced with various issues around development. This symposium gives us the right words and concepts to enable us to work with civic and provincial authorities to protect our various creeks. We very much need to get everyone on a meter system for water”*
- *“I wear several hats. I’m a wetlands ecologist (master’s in marine science), contracted as a coordinator with two local environmental NGOs that focus on watershed health. I’m also a civic volunteer, reviewing development applications and contributing to local initiatives (e.g., collaborating on a beaver mgmt plan – which I hope will be a dynamic document that springboards into a watershed health “program” for my city. Lastly, I am a freelance writer for my local paper, featuring a ‘living green’ article every month so I have oodles of opportunities to share and incorporate the “best available science” with various audiences!”*
- *“Knowledgeable collaboration”*
- *“The symposium reloaded/refreshed my tool belt with science, connections, examples of how tools are used, and how to build or re-purpose tools”* – a defining comment
- *“Wonderful networking opportunities”*
- *“Use information to solidify my own understanding of subject in order to influence and educate others”*
- *“I know who to go to for success stories. The financial breakdown and details of how Natural Municipal Assets actually save a community money were very compelling”*
- *“There are a number of developments going on in Campbell River adjacent to headwater wetlands that are proposing to send the water that once fed them to a downstream location. ??? Essentially choking off*

the flow of the very feature that the Riparian Area Regulation requires a setback. I have the weight and expertise of this group to push for something better”

- *“Fill information gaps”*
- *“I work for the Federal Government, this knowledge affirmed and highlights the need to focus stewards efforts both at the local scale and watershed level land developments”*
- *“The connections I made/strengthened and the knowledge gained at this symposium will be a great asset in allowing me to move forward with sustainability actions. I have a relatively clear picture of what actions I can take and which organizations I can partner with” – a defining comment*
- *“Shows that it is possible to bring together local government and the stewardship sector”*
- *“Motivation – the success of restorative land development, balancing water objectives and quantifying our ecological community assets”*
- *“Sharing ideas with others, references – how did they overcome some of their challenges and how might that help us move forward”*
- *“It will help but this knowledge has to get out to more than just the “converted”. We have too many people in government positions, on staff and in the consulting industry who are not up-to-speed on the latest views and if they are, they are having trouble pushing for those concepts to supervisors and decision makers. The real life examples will support the proposals we make to government”*
- *“The more I understand, the better I can support others in the work they do. It was also a very good networking opportunity”*
- *“I work for an umbrella group of stewardship groups and this symposium helped me hone skills to better server stewards”*
- *“To follow up on the items of interest I wrote down in my notes. To learn more about the existing programs on Vancouver Island. To identify in what ways I can contribute to the work on Vancouver Island”*
- *“Teach a course on the history and development of the Salish Sea — I will integrate content and ideas”*
- *“I just attended in a learning capacity- I don’t work in the field, but know it is a very important issue that we all need to know more about”*
- *“Help with team building and networking”*
- *I learned important information regarding what others are doing about issues that we are having in our own local watersheds and how to present information regarding our water quality. It was especially exciting to have the very people who can help us right there at the symposium and how willing they were to follow up with us. Additionally, it provided important contacts to collaborate on issues”*
- *“Learned new techniques”*
- *“The mayor and CAO had the opportunity to involve citizens in restoration and science, something that I have been trying to push. The examples are not only inspiring, but proof that it works” – a defining comment*

As for the previous question, a logical next step in evaluating these responses would be to group them into themes.

Closing Reflections

- *“This symposium was beyond all my expectations and happened to coincide with the very issues I was tackling in both my volunteer and work (fish stream related) lives. Thank you for the superlative information distribution, website and follow up. I especially enjoyed Kim’s summaries and enthusiasm tying all the components together after each break. I look forward to the Dave Derrick slides”*
- *“I have attended various meetings with your group for many years. I am both a volunteer and an RPBio. That your group exists and does this work gives me hope when so often conservation efforts seem like a long slow retreat. What I heard this last two days suggests we are reaching an important tipping point into a whole new culture of working with natural systems”*
- *“Great work to all involved. The Parksville Symposium was a fantastic event all around. Learned so much and thought it had everything one could want, keep up the wonderful work!”*
- *“I was impressed to see the attendance by so many regional staff, managers and local politician. I want the same kind of attendance if the symposium were to be held in Victoria region”*

- *“The talent pool and motivation is huge. Keep it focused. Regular updates on successes and failures will keep it flowing.”*
- *“Loved the exercise by Julie Pisani. Great opportunity to connect and learn. Always appreciate the format and organization of the symposium. Summations by Richard and Storm are valuable as it is so easy to get overwhelmed in the details and concepts”*
- *“Great idea to bring in the University students. Lots of great information I look forward to reviewing all the slides on line. The tour of the water treatment plant was very informative. The food was good, liked Storm’s evening presentation”*
- *“All the speakers were great and I did learn a few things. Everyone that was involved were friendly and easy to talk to”*
- *“Loved the event. Really inspirational. Dave Derrick and Storm were great. So was the Bowker and Brooklyn Creek talks. It’s nice to have balance between the problems and hardships with success. It brings us through the lows, which we all resonate with, and then uplifts back into action. Really well done, amazing MC’s. Planning on coming back next year if work allows it :)”*
- *“Appreciated the layered design of this conference, the interactive components (too brief), and the opportunity to hear and discuss in-depth discussions of restoration projects that appeared to be headed for success”*
- *“Loved seeing so many streamkeeper groups and volunteers. Such a critical resource!”*
- *“Thank You, Kim, John, Richard & Team for putting so much careful thought, heart and soul into these symposia. Your long-lived passions are paying off :)”*
- *“Thank you for bringing together so many people who are passionate about keeping our water systems healthy! Inspiring”*
- *“Thank you SO much for an excellent conference. Would you consider attending and presenting at the Lower Mainland Local Government Association Conference in May 2020??”*
- *“Thank you for pulling together the people and sharing the successes and challenges. Very motivating”*
- *“Thank you for organizing such a stellar event!!”*
- *“Thank you for organizing a Class A event!!!”*
- *“Thanks for organizing!”*
- *“Thank you for all the effort you put into this event. Some of your principals have been at this game for quite a while. Is there a succession plan to find new leadership? This program must continue – there is much work yet to do”*
- *“Keep up the good work in getting the message out there”*
- *“I attended the symposium last year as well. My impression last year was WOW – that was a world class symposium! A number of factors probably played into my impression this year (not all new material, speakers, change in my role, didn’t attend the field trips this year...) but I came away saying it was good and worthwhile attending but it didn’t have quite the same impact for me this year. Wondering if it is one of those events that things don’t change enough to hold it / attend every year but maybe every other year? So, I will have to take a good look at the program next year to decide whether I will register. Of course, coming away the challenge is always to keep the momentum going. More focus on “next steps” may have been helpful? Thank you to all of the organizers, presenters and volunteers!”*
- *“First of all, thank you for creating the symposium. Manage participant fatigue/expectations by keeping presentations within time – this is difficult for sure when passion is in such abundance. Maybe having a bit (5-15 minutes) of Storm at the beginning to set the “RE” theme to reopen our minds for recreating possibilities and reminding us of the global context in relation to our local day to day reality. A First Nations blessing and water story/song may have fit with Paul’s water poem”*
- *“You might want to consider this every two years, on the other hand, we are in a climate crisis. I was totally disappointed that local Parksville/Qualicum Beach planners and politicians weren’t there”*
- *“In future, I would reduce the amount of time allocated to rah, rah “context setting” and motivational speeches. Too much marketing, jargon and superlative use. Just a personal view”*
- *“The conference program offered practical information for the range of practitioners attending. The program was a little heavy on technical details. The work of Storm Cunningham was most interesting, but many of his examples of restoration are at a scale not likely in Canada, except in the largest cities”*
- *“The audience is quite familiar with much of the information presented. I heard from many people that they were not learning many new things from the presentations. Perhaps more emphasis on cutting edge*

techniques we can apply in the streams, or other ways to assess stream health (other than water quality) such as plant assemblage, wildlife surveys, etc. The small group activity on the last day was very fruitful in terms of discussion – more of this could be really valuable”

- *“Stick to time schedule, and remember that meeting with other attendees is as important as the presentations themselves”*
- *“The hands on field portion could be expanded. The audience could also be expanded. I heard many times that the group was fairly homogeneous – it would be very effective to have representatives from other industries, other departments in the local government and more private sector companies involved”*
- *“It was nicely balanced between the outlining the issues and suggesting some of the remedies. There could have been more breakout sessions and the ability to move around. Very hard to sit there for hours especially after lunch”*
- *“All the events were useful and informative. I come from a social sciences background, not a natural sciences background and everything is exciting and motivating to me. I love learning about streams, fish, native plants, invasive plants, etc.”*
- ***“Looking forward to the next in the series in 2020 in the Comox Valley”***
- ***“Excited for 20(H)20!!”***



In future, delegates said they would like to see:

- *“Another one next year!”*
- *“This should become an annual event”*
- *“Another similar event next year or the year after”*
- *“Another symposium next year”*
- *“If this becomes a regular annual event, I think that would be great. I also love the idea of smaller lunch and learns throughout the island”*
- *“More networking time with conference participants”*
- *“Hands on event, including site visits”*
- *“More events like the workshop with Dave Derrick, with more room! We were so sad that we didn't register sooner to get into the workshop. It sounded fantastic”*
- *“In-field classes are great. Really enjoyed Shelly Creek. How policy can support watersheds”*
- *“Outdoor session was great, could have another during the regular part of workshop?”*
- *“A down in the dirt nuts and bolts workshop with speakers explaining how to build things”*
- *“More workshops like the one from Dave Derrick, that in itself could have been a three day workshop. Also really enjoyed FLNRO's (FLNRORD's) presentation, more from senior government would be great too.”*
- *“Discussions with local communities about local watershed destruction. Seeking solutions using local knowledge”*
- *“Let's start looking at communities that are tackling the idea of carrying capacity. How are they doing it?”*
- *“Sessions on organizing partnerships: principles and practices. Sessions on involving and educating politicians”*

- *“Although we had good attendance there are still many needed people missing from the table. We need to ensure that everyone has enough confidence to participate and make decisions... timely”*
- *“Watershed roundtable processes, stronger linkages with the BC Water Sustainability Act and its outcomes”*
- *“I would suggest you develop a template for a facilitated meeting, maybe an afternoon once a year per watershed, between stewardship groups and the local government of that watershed. This would include staff and elected officials with stewardship groups, to discuss successes, what could be improved, goals and future plans. I would like to up the level of importance of communication between local governments and stewardship groups”*
- *“Planning event for the next stages; finding ways to connect stewardship activities on a larger scale. Developing tools to explain watershed planning simply. Defining and experimenting with tools for expanding public awareness and involvement”*
- *“Mentoring opportunities; engaging younger persons who can understand how “elders” have arrived at their philosophical and practical outlooks and involvement in protection of the ecology”*
- *“Bringing this group together annually seems adequate, and then smaller groups/more directly related groups can come together on their own outside of the formal event”*
- *“Additional shoulder events if possible. not all staff can make space in their workload to attend the three days so perhaps interim workshops would make use of the external expertise brought in to the workshops”*
- *“I know it is a lot of work and very expensive but we should have an event like this every year but on slightly different topics. How about one on how truly sustainable forestry and urban forests will contribute to healthier watersheds?”*
- *“More field trip opportunities or better yet, a chance to come together with our sleeves rolled up and DO restoration, ideally with a First Nation community – illustrating reconciliation at its finest. More table discussion sessions. An event celebrating Women in Water!”*
- *“Regional districts and Municipalities organized to ask the Province and Feds through ‘inspirational demand’ that they enact legislation that help mitigate and adapt to climate change. Unfortunately, the FEDS and PROVINCE are in many instances our worst enemies – Why investments in clean energy are so little? Why are we investing in LNG, a very detrimental industry? Why are we still supporting gas companies? The implications for their policies are huge but we don't have too much time to act – less than 12 years”*
- *“Would like to continue to better understand the valuation and management of natural assets”*
- *“Let's talk about trees and forests and vegetation and soil”*
- *“More talk about trees please and the vital role they play”*
- *“Hydrology of the eastern Fraser Valley and how to include its agricultural community in these discussions “*
- *“I would love to see City of Victoria host this symposium soon”*
- *“Have a symposium in the Okanagan”*
- *“Small scale workshops designed to inform and build into the next Symposium to be held in Comox Valley”*

And the final takeaway that defines Parksville 2019:

- ***“Please keep up the good work of providing such a good place for scientists, stewards and others to learn about our rivers, streams. It's important to see the connection to everything that lives in this environment and especially us and how we can learn to be much less destructive”*** – a defining comment

To Learn More:

To view the graphical presentation of the responses to the 12-question survey, download a PDF copy of [Parksville Water Stewardship Symposium 2019 – Post Event Survey](#).

To download a PDF copy of the foregoing story, click on [ONLINE SURVEY > Parksville 2019 Symposium started strong and finished strong; remarkable 40% response rate by delegates confirmed that the key](#).

[educational objectives were fulfilled](#)

Improve Where We Live – Good Strategies are Our Path to Success:

- Reconnect hydrology and ecology
– what happens on the land in
creeksheds matters to streams!
- Decrease our destructive footprint
while at the same time increasing
our restorative footprint – sustainable
is attainable!

