



the partnership  
for water sustainability in bc

Waterbucket eNews on January 23, 2024  
<https://waterbucket.ca/wscblog/>

# Living Water Smart in British Columbia:

*There is no time to  
re-invent the wheel*



## Note to Reader:

Waterbucket eNews<sup>1</sup> celebrates the leadership of individuals and organizations who are guided by the vision for **Living Water Smart in British Columbia**<sup>2</sup>.

The edition published on January 23, 2024 featured the Partnership's **Annual Report 2023**. The document is written to inform and engage the reader through a storytelling approach to sharing of information.

The umbrella for Partnership initiatives and programs is the **Water Sustainability Action Plan for British Columbia**<sup>3</sup>. In turn, the Action Plan is nested within **Living Water Smart, British Columbia's Water Plan**.



Cover Image Credit: photo by Cameron Stephens

<sup>1</sup> <https://waterbucket.ca/wscblog/>

<sup>2</sup> [https://waterbucket.ca/wcp/wp-content/uploads/sites/6/2017/11/livingwatersmart\\_book.pdf](https://waterbucket.ca/wcp/wp-content/uploads/sites/6/2017/11/livingwatersmart_book.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.waterbucket.ca/cfa/sites/wbccfa/documents/media/81.pdf>

## One-Minute Takeaway



“This organization, this network, has always been about bringing together likeminded people. And we have always been nimble and opportunistic. And I think that has to be a part of whatever this is going forward... continuing to be NIMBLE AND OPPORTUNISTIC.”

Ray Fung, retired Director of Engineering

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### There is no time to re-invent the wheel

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Growing a network breaks all the rules of conventional thinking. It is the antithesis of building an organization that has staff. Instead, the network aligns individuals and organizations to deliver results across organizational boundaries.

However, a network does require a nucleus or “engine” for legal and organizational continuity. The Partnership for Water Sustainability serves that function for our local government partners. Ensuring continuity of the network comes down to how organizations continue WITHIN the network.

### Summit at the Bastion in Nanaimo

Last October, the Partnership for Water Sustainability brought together some 30 ambassadors representing a dozen organizations. They participated in a consultation session around what some might view as an existential topic: What the Partnership and our network look like after the Year 2025.

Going forward, this watershed moment will forever be known as the Summit at the Bastion in Nanaimo. At the conclusion, Ray Fung summarized and reflected on aha moments that emerged during the sharing session.

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*“We are a movement built around water sustainability,” stated Ray Fung in his closing reflections on what he heard at the Summit at the Bastion in Nanaimo*

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"Emotion is important. Relationships are important," stated Ray Fung. "It is not just the science and the work itself but the emotion that seems to bind us together in this purpose. And so storytelling becomes a really important way of pointing out successes. BE THE NEXT SUCCESS STORY."

Ray Fung's reflections are included in the Partnership's Annual Report 2023 and thus provide a record of the summit outcome.



## Editor's Perspective by Kim A Stephens

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### What the Partnership and associated network will look like after the Year 2025

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One ambassador described the **Summit at the Bastion in Nanaimo** as a turning point in our convening for action story. But it can be so much more. In fact, it will be the springboard to creating a future which so many of us desire, one which coalesces around a shared vision for **Water Reconciliation**.

"The Partnership is seen as a resource that is stable, that is there, and that people can draw upon," observed Ray Fung. But the founding leadership team is aging out. Growing and sustaining the network through time is very much about finding those to whom we can pass the baton, now and in the future.

Succession within the Partnership legal entity is an intergenerational commitment. The 70-yr-olds pass the baton to the 60-yr-olds... who in turn groom the 50-yr-olds...and so on and so on and so on.

### The Partnership is viewed as a movement built around water sustainability

Ray Fung captured the mood of the summit with this summation:


"I liked the comment that THIS IS A MOVEMENT. I find that is really inspiring to not see ourselves just as a network. We are a movement built around water sustainability. We leave the summit inspired to figure out how the FORM of the Partnership will follow the FUNCTION."

"We can learn things from expanding our perspective. Part of that holistic approach includes the SPIRITUAL as well as the physical connection to the land."

## STORY BEHIND THE STORY:

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### The Partnership for Water Sustainability's 3-Year Transition Strategy for ensuring continuity of the network - as explained by Ted van der Gulik, President



"In Year One, the Partnership accomplished what we set out to accomplish. We proceeded on three parallel tracks and established relationships with a new generation of provincial decisionmakers and staff. The paths meandered at times. But we exceeded our own expectations."

Ted van der Gulik

*Extracted from Annual Report 2023, the "story behind the story" is a 450-word essay written by Ted van der Gulik for his **President's Perspective**. He paints a broad-brush picture of where the Partnership is heading.*

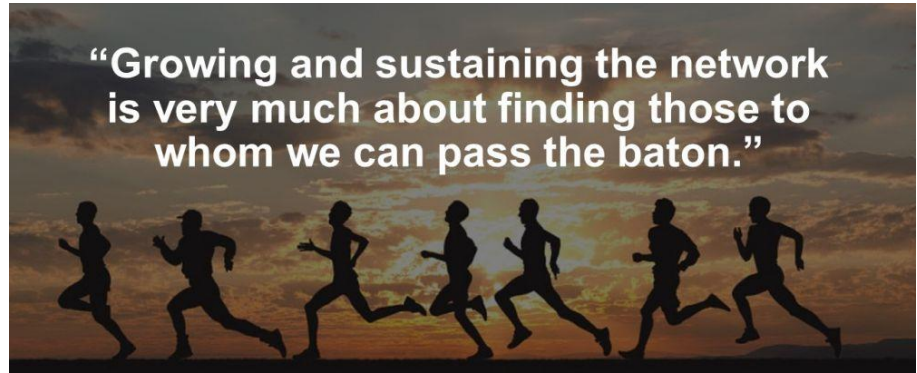
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### We did what we said we would do!

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"A challenge confronting our society is widespread organizational amnesia. The baby boomers have more or less gone out the door. And with them has gone so much oral history. Knowledge and experience are not being passed on. **Organizational amnesia** is the consequence," wrote Ted van der Gulik.

"It is a race against time to pass on knowledge and experience. It feels like the gap caused by loss of understanding is widening. When those coming into organizations **do not know what they do not know**, loss of understanding of the WHAT, WHY and HOW is a cause of concern in managing expectations."

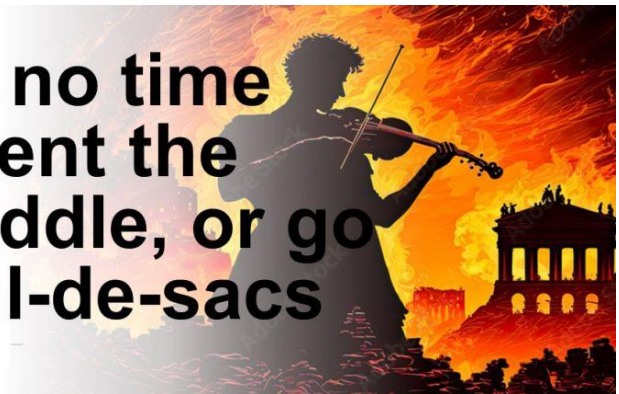


### **Our mission is intergenerational in scope**

"The Partnership is the engine for a network in the local government setting. Our mission is intergenerational. This means we are striving to bridge the gap in understanding; and we are doing what we can to help governments overcome organizational amnesia."

"The clock is ticking, and we are working hard to shape this outcome: *what the Partnership and associated network will look like after the Year 2025*. At the end of Year One, we can proudly state that we accomplished what we set out to accomplish in 2023. We exceeded our own expectations. We are ahead of schedule in moving forward with the strategy for **network continuity**."

**There is no time  
to re-invent the  
wheel, fiddle, or go  
down cul-de-sacs**



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## **We must look back to see ahead**

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"In 2023, the Partnership had two over-arching objectives. One was to connect with a new generation of provincial decisionmakers and staff. The other was to bring our [Ambassadors Program](#) to the forefront of provincial and local government awareness. We accomplished both objectives, and all the way up to Premier David Eby, as we proceeded down three parallel tracks to:

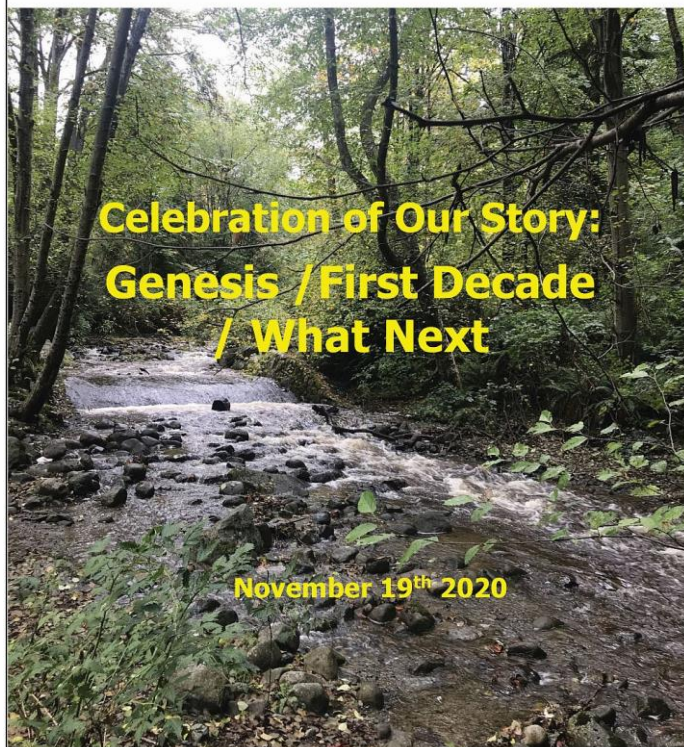
- **WATER TOOLS** - Find a permanent home for a suite of online tools that the provincial water management program already relies on for water licensing. These tools provide a powerful capability for **water sustainability planning** as envisioned in the Province's Watershed Security Strategy.
  
- **ECOLOGICAL ACCOUNTING PROCESS (EAP)** – Train next generations of planners and local government staff to tackle the **riparian deficit** along urban streams. The EAP methodology and metrics address the disconnect in the Riparian Area Protection Regulation (RPAR) between land use oversight and direct responsibility for maintenance and management of stream condition.
  
- **BLUE ECOLOGY** – Build a bridge between two cultures through a **water-first approach**, one that embraces lessons learned from Indigenous oral history and imbues a change in attitude among water managers. We describe this desired outcome as Water Reconciliation."

"We have started to engage government with training and will continue through 2024. We also convened the inaugural Ambassadors of the Partnership Forum and will build on the energy that it generated. It is full speed ahead down all three tracks!"





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TO LEARN MORE, VISIT:

<https://waterbucket.ca/about-us/>

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## About the Partnership for Water Sustainability in British Columbia

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Incorporation of the Partnership for Water Sustainability in British Columbia as a not-for-profit society on November 19, 2010 was a milestone moment. Incorporation signified a bold leap forward.

Over two decades, the Partnership had evolved from a technical committee in the 1990s, to a “water roundtable” in the first decade of the 2000s, and then to a legal entity. The Partnership has its roots in government – local, provincial, federal.

The Partnership has a primary goal, to **build bridges of understanding** and pass the baton from the past to the present and future. To achieve the goal, the Partnership is growing a network in the local government setting. This network embraces collaborative leadership and **inter-generational collaboration**.

The Partnership believes that when each generation is receptive to accepting the inter-generational baton and embracing the wisdom that goes with it, the decisions of successive generations will benefit from and build upon the experience of those who went before them.

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