

# Draft topics for Coquitlam River Watershed Body Terms of Reference

Prepared for CRW Strategy Phase III discussions  
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## **INTRODUCTION**

Terms of reference for our purposes can also be thought of as “Rules of the organization.” They set out the type of organization we want.

Once terms of reference are detailed, they could also take the form of by-laws, policies or rules of order. The organization would probably generate other guiding documents – some on a regular schedule, such as strategic plans, work plans and budgets. Sub-committees of the new organization could have their own terms of reference. The new body could also develop a watershed plan as a central rationale for priorities and actions.

This document suggests that terms of reference are ultimately needed in four categories: Overall direction, Goals, Structure and operation, and Evaluation and adaptation. Much progress has already been made in the Overall direction category, with values and vision defined, and a mission drafted. There are many ideas to draw on from Phase I research, Phase II discussions, and the experience from other watersheds for all other categories in the terms of reference.

*Several topics in the terms of reference can, and some probably should, be left to the members of the new organization launching in Phase IV.*

## **1 OVERALL DIRECTION**

The “big picture” orientation of an organization can be described by Vision and Values, which were confirmed in Phase II for the CRW Strategy, and a Mission, which was drafted in Phase II. Guiding principles are also common and can be a helpful touchstone. These components rarely change in the life of an organization as they provide consistency; however they can be revisited and revised from time to time.

### **1.1 Vision**

Our Common Vision is:

A healthy watershed supported and enjoyed by the community in a manner that respects our common values through:

- Partnerships and collaboration;
- Education, stewardship, and monitoring;
- Conservation and green economics; and
- Responsible decision-making.

In perpetuity.

### **1.2 Our Values for the watershed**

Our Values for the watershed:

- Spiritual qualities;

- Ecosystem integrity;
- Natural beauty;
- Native bio-diversity;
- Natural resources;
- Public access;
- Home/ Heritage/ Culture;
- Responsibility to protect;
- Recreation;
- Protected areas; and,
- Sustainability.

**Kwikwetlem** known as Coquitlam- “Red fish up the river”- a living river that reveals its spirit.

### **1.3 Mission**

Mission was defined as follows at a Phase II meeting: “A mission statement is a prescriptive statement that defines why and entity exists and what an organization does.”

Phase II workshop participants ran out of time to finalize the following draft mission statement, hoping it would be confirmed in Phase III:

Our Mission is:

To restore and improve the health of the Coquitlam River watershed by creating and supporting a community that recognizes and promotes [the watershed] through:

- Communication,
- Coordination,
- Collaboration, and
- Education.

### **1.4 Guiding Principles**

From Phase II: “Guiding Principles are proactive statements about the way in which an organization will operate to achieve its mission. These statements that are focused on success and they respect the organization’s stated values.” Phase II discussions listed many ideas about principles. The other watersheds we have studied provide examples to follow, as do expert reports on governance.

## **2 GOALS**

Goals set out more specifically what an organization will pursue to meet the priorities set in its overall direction (mission, etc.). Goals are central to strategic planning and guiding an organization’s activities. For example, annually, the organization can select goals to focus on, and generate projects (including on-the-ground projects) under those goals.

Fundraising, etc. would be oriented to those projects. Goals are revised more often than vision, values, mission and principles.

The key areas listed below come directly from wording in the Vision and draft Mission and from themes that were raised often in Phase II discussions. For each key area a goal (or a few goals) could be developed. Ultimately, the goals should be clear and concise, and measurable – or spelled out through measurable objectives.

- 2.1 Coordination for Responsible Decision-making  
(includes information sharing/knowledge management)
- 2.2 Education
- 2.3 Stewardship
- 2.4 Monitoring
- 2.5 Conservation and Green economics
- 2.6 Developing a Coquitlam River Watershed Plan

For almost all of these key areas there are many ideas to draw from in the Phase II records. For the 6<sup>th</sup> one, Developing a CWR Plan, there is much experience to draw on from other watersheds (e.g. Chilliwack, Nisqually, Salmon).

### **3 STRUCTURE AND OPERATION**

There is much to draw on in this section of the terms of reference from:

- presentations during Phase II of the CRW Strategy
- discussions during Phase II
- the experience of the other watersheds as shared at the October 2009 conference
- Planning Team meetings of Phase III

The Phase I report on watershed interests and their perspectives is also relevant.

Suggested sub-topics for this component of the terms of reference are:

- 3.1 Organizational structure
- 3.2 Members/ parties represented (and terms/process for joining)
- 3.3 Within-group decision-making
- 3.4 Community engagement
- 3.5 Funding and administration

### **4 EVALUATION AND ADAPTATION**

Good governance requires regular assessment of effectiveness and adjustment based on the results. Goals and objectives provide a basis for evaluation.