



# Coquitlam River Watershed Roundtable

*Kwikwetlem, known as “Red fish up the river.  
A living river that reveals its spirit.*

## Coquitlam River Watershed Roundtable Community Meeting Summary Notes

**Date/Time:** Saturday, June 10, 2017 9:00 pm – 2:30 pm  
**Location:** Workroom, The Outlet, Leigh Square, 1100-2248 McAllister, Port Coquitlam, BC  
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*NOTE:* The presentations were recorded on video during the course of the community meeting. Videos and the Power Point presentations can be found on the Roundtable website and You Tube channel.

Multimedia links:

- **Videos:** [CRWR YouTube channel](#)
- **PowerPoint presentations:** In the Resources box on the [Roundtable webpage](#)
- **Photos:** [CRWR photo gallery](#)
- [Meeting agenda](#)
- [Master PowerPoint slides](#) including outline, agenda, closing remarks

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## Welcome

*Neil MacEachern, Environmental Coordinator for Port Coquitlam*

MacEachern welcomed everyone and noted that today's meeting is taking place on the ancestral and unceded territory of the Kwikwetlem First Nation, with thanks. In particular, he welcomed the following dignitaries in attendance:

- Fin Donnelly, MP for Port Moody-Coquitlam
- Joan Isaacs, MLA for Coquitlam-Burke Mountain
- Selina Robinson, MLA for Coquitlam-Maillardville
- Chris Wilson, Councillor from City of Coquitlam

## Opening Remarks

*Fin Donnelly, MP for Port Moody-Coquitlam*

On behalf of Parliament, Donnelly welcomed participants and colleagues, and offered special acknowledgements to Melissa Dick, coordinator of Coquitlam River Watershed Roundtable (CRWR), and Margaret Birch, of the CRWR Core Committee. Noting that Coquitlam River has been on the endangered rivers list for many years, he joked that he's been involved since he served as a City of Coquitlam Councillor and chaired an advisory group was called the Coquitlam River Aggregate Committee, more fondly known as CRAC. The CRAC included the two cities, the provincial government, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, BC Hydro, Metro Vancouver and the stewardship community. In 2007 the advisory committee supported the City of Coquitlam and Kwikwetlem First Nation to begin a community visioning engagement process that would expand including more sectors to improve the dialogue in the watershed, which eventually evolved into the Coquitlam River Watershed Roundtable in early 2011.

The missing component at that time was the community, he said, which is what we see here. "Funding for sustainable development may not be sexy outside this room," he said, "but for those of you here it's a critical piece of the work you're doing." Innovative ideas like taxation for watersheds are essential to funding the work, and you never know which aspects of the work are going to have the greatest impact. He recalled an OCP to which he brought "a seemingly meaningless and minor change" by requesting that a reference to things occurring "before or during" the development process, be changed to eliminate "or during." The removal of those two little words went on to be precedent-setting. Watershed management planning needs to happen before development and if we can get that happening here, he said, other jurisdictions will follow suit.

Donnelly then acknowledged the stewards in room for focusing their attention on the cutting of funding for the salmon in the classroom program. He noted that he'd been called on in the House of Commons in the last week more than ever before because, although a significant sum of funding cut by the previous government had been restored to DFO, the \$500,000 to run this important educational

program had been cut. With luck, all the attention that the stewards had drawn to this issue will see that funding restored.

*Selina Robinson, MLA for Coquitlam-Maillardville*

MacEachern then welcomed Robinson, who recalled that when she'd been on Coquitlam City Council and Donnelly had left to take up his new post as an MP, she'd had to opportunity to represent the City on the CRWR. "I'm a family therapist and it felt like family therapy," she said, as fishers, environmentalists, industry reps, and others struggled to come together and see each other, not as adversaries, but as people who all had investments in water. Now an MLA, she's been in the role of local government opposition critic. It has "filled me with tremendous pride" to talk about what we're doing as a community and work to find our shared values. She thanked everyone present for creating a model for the way to do things and for teaching her a lot.

*Joan Isaacs, MLA for Coquitlam-Burke Mountain*

MacEachern welcomed newly elected Joan Isaacs to the podium. Commenting that she had just been sworn in two days earlier, she said she lacked all the pertinent background on the organization, but had lived close to river for 30 years and was very familiar with the aggregate problem. "This is an important issue to me personally," and it's important work to figure out a sustainable funding model."

## **Keynote Address**

*Kim Stephens, Partnership for Water Sustainability*

[Access PowerPoint slides](#) and view the [video of this session](#).

Steffanie Warriner, Environmental Services Manager for the City of Coquitlam, introduced keynote speaker Kim Stephens, an engineer-planner and Executive Director of the Partnership for Water Sustainability in BC. Stephens has four decades of experiences, specializes in public policy, and since 2003 he has been responsible for developing and delivering the Water Sustainability Action Plan for BC, an array of initiatives that promote a water-centric approach to community planning. Stephens is internationally recognized for his pioneering efforts and speaks often on the BC experience at events throughout North American and in Australia.

Stephens noted that, when he was in graduate school, there was a focus on systems. Over a century ago, John Muir said that, "everything is connected." In 1967, Ian McHarg, wrote that "scientists had not yet discovered the environment." His book, *Design with Nature*, was published in 1969, and the next year Richard Nixon formed the Environmental Protection Agency. That was only 50 years ago, and "we've come a long way," but we've become increasingly reductive in our thinking. Our next mission must be to address the lack of integration in environmental sciences.

Two concepts are key to this: first, the journey to a resilient future will be intergenerational; and second, it will only be successful when undertaken with a regional team approach. We've always talked about

the importance of taking a regional view, but it's only in the past decade that we've started talking about a team approach. We need to encourage all players in the local setting, from provincial and local governments to developers, the agricultural community, First Nations, and environmental stewards to agree on their expectations and work together so each community can reach its goals in its own way.

"When I talk to audiences outside BC, they don't really understand why it takes us longer to do things here, but it's because of this commitment we have here to working together," he said. The BC process for moving from awareness to action is founded on alignment, collaboration, and partnership. We work through the steps of:

1. **What** is the issue (understand it locally)?
2. So **what** can be done (influence practitioners to design with nature)?
3. Now **what** can we do (embrace shared responsibility, learn by doing and establish precedents)?
4. And **then** what do we do (replicate our successes in other communities)?

A process called Convening for Action shows that success will follow when local governments:

1. Choose to be enabled (i.e. recognize that it is a choice)
2. Establish high expectations
3. Embrace shared vision
4. Collaborate as a regional team
5. Align and integrate efforts
6. Celebrate innovation and successes (because people often don't know they're being innovative until they share their experiences)
7. Connect with community advocates
8. Develop local government talent (i.e. mentor those coming up, e.g. succession planning)
9. Promote shared responsibility
10. Change land ethic for the better

Integrating perspectives leads to action, education, participation, shared and achievable goals, understanding, ownership, and finally action and implementation. This is not a linear process but full of cross-connections, each feeding into the others. Ultimately, the critical success factors include building commitment, finding champions, promoting accountability, and fostering resources.

When we think about moving toward sustainable watershed systems, we must remember that what happens on the land matters. We need to look at the water cycle with fresh eyes to develop new approaches, methodologies, and tools that will enable communities to achieve sustainable watershed systems through asset management.

"Everyone learns the basic water cycle in Grade 5 but then they seem to forget it," he said. The going thought process in this Province is that everything—drought, forest fires, floods—is incremental and leads to new ideas at a legislative level. In 2014, there were three game changers:

- Water Sustainability Act

- Develop with Care: Environmental Guidelines for Urban and Rural Land Development in BC
- Asset Management for Sustainable Service Delivery: A Framework for BC.

The last is the lynchpin because it's tied in with funding for sustainable development. We've consciously linked the way we talk about things with the last of the three because, when it's about money, people listen.

Over the past decade in BC, thought leaders have encouraged practitioners to think like a system rather than an accountant. That is, they're taking language from asset management and applying it to watersheds. That's the new paradigm and the right language: a watershed is an integrated system. The guiding principles for managing watershed protection include understanding:

1. How water gets to a stream.
2. Where the water goes naturally (so we can reproduce those conditions).
3. How we've damaged those pathways, so we can restore the ones we've damaged the most.

In sum, we need to look at development differently. We need to engineer infrastructure that fits into natural systems, not the other way around. We need to think like a watershed, in order to understand how a watershed, streams, groundwater, sites, and people function as a whole system.

<http://coquitlam.waterbalance-express.ca/> features a tool that's interfaced with Google Maps and Google Earth to help users understand these things better. An example of putting this kind of thinking to work in sustainable development is a rain garden, but there are many more examples that demonstrate that watershed sustainability is achievable. The term "cathedral thinking" describes the mindset needed to develop a vision for sustainable watershed system through asset management. In the past, cathedrals took hundreds of years to build. When people started, they knew they'd never see the finished building, but they were on a journey with a far-reaching vision, a well thought-out blueprint, and a shared commitment. And those are the things you need to keep in mind as you go through your work today.

## **Session 1.1. Business Proposal Review and Panel Session**

*Zita Botelho, Sustainable Funding for Watershed Governance Initiative*

*Steve Litke, Fraser Basin Council*

*Julie Pisani, Drinking Water and Watershed Protection Program, Regional District of Nanaimo*

*Trish Hall, CRWR Financial Trustee (Moderator)*

[Access PowerPoint slides](#) and view the [video of this session](#).

Melissa Dick, Roundtable Coordinator opened the Session with an overview noted that a draft business proposal has been created, and the CRWR is now looking for public input. To provide background to participants who may be less familiar with the CRWR, she said the Roundtable was formed in 2011 to provide a multi-sectoral approach to watershed management, guided by a mission statement, vision, and guiding principles. The CRWR has no government role but serves in an advisory capacity. Until

recently, it has survived on project grants and donations, and funding has fluctuated widely. This makes it difficult to do long-term planning that will ensure the organization, itself, is sustainable.

Currently, the CRWR has multi-year grants that have been provided to help build resilience and capacity, advance the watershed plan, and share research and knowledge. The conversation on sustainable funding really got started at the POLIS workshop in February of 2016. The key to sustainable funding is diversity. There is definitely a role for local governments, but the pressing need is to find funds from a variety of sources in order to make long-range planning as realistic as possible. The following panel discussion is designed to provide examples of how other BC communities are dealing with their watershed issues, including sustainable funding. After we hear from participants, we'll incorporate ideas into the business plan, take it to the city, and proceed from there.

Moderator Trish Hall, a member of the CRWR, introduced the three panelists:

- Zita Botelho is an independent consultant who previously managed strategic water initiatives at the BC Ministry of Environment. She led the development of Living Water Smart and the initial phases of the Water Sustainability Act. She is currently the project manager of the Sustainable Funding for Watershed Governance Initiative (SFWGI).
- Steve Litke has worked with the Fraser Basin Council since 1998 and is the senior manager for the Watersheds and Water Resources Program. He has worked with collaborative watershed groups across BC and overseen the development of guidance documents and watershed planning, governance, as well as financial mechanisms to support them.
- Julie Pisani coordinates the Drinking Water and Watershed Protection (DWWP) Program at the Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN). Her background is in environmental communications and interpretation, with a specialty in water and watershed management, and she leads the implementation of the DWWP Action Plan in the RDN.

Hall then directed questions to each participant.

(For Botelho) You are currently the project manager of the Sustainable Funding for Watershed Governance Initiative. Who is behind it and what are its objectives?

- Botelho said she'd attended the POLIS workshop in 2016 and "it feels like quick turnaround to be here today." She got involved through the Ministry of Environment as a representative to the POLIS group, a multiple disciplinary project on ecological governance housed at the University of Victoria. At that time, it was agreed to invest time and money into moving forward with the SFWGI. Partners currently include the Real Estate Foundation of BC, BC Ministry of Environment, POLIS, First Nations Issues Council, and the Ministry of Community, Sport and Cultural Development.

(For Litke) The Fraser Basin Council currently supports several regional initiatives in BC seeking sustainable funding, such as the Nechako Watershed Roundtable (NWR). What are some similarities and differences between the NWR and the CRWR?

- The Nechako group actually modeled itself after this Roundtable, Litke said, noting in particular the aspects of inclusion, diversity, First Nations participation, and looking at the issues on a watershed scale. The differences include the size of the two watersheds (the Nechako is 50,000+ sq. km) and the relevance of issues with the Crown, differences between the communities, and the fact that the Nechako group is also much younger in its evolution.

(For Pisani) The Regional District of Nanaimo created the DWWP Program in 2008. Its purpose is to coordinate education, science, and planning for long-term, adequate clean water supply for communities and ecosystems in the region. What is the program's funding source, what sparked its creation, and what key lessons were learned in the process?

- In Nanaimo early in the 2000s, Pisani said, elected officials looking at growth and sustainability had identified that water was essential to every aspect of the prosperity of their growing region. In 2005, with input from a variety of stakeholders, they released a 10-year plan that proposed a wide array of actions. The crucial question was how to fund it. In 2008, a referendum asked voters if they'd be willing to pay through a parcel tax for science, education, and so on around watershed issues. The result was an \$8 per year parcel tax on residents, regardless of where they live in the region (i.e. urban, rural, upriver or downriver) because they're all involved in different ways.

Hall then opened up the panel to the following general questions:

- What are some key findings related to different types of funding models and mechanisms at the senior, local, First Nations, and non-government levels?
- What connections exist between individual watershed initiatives exploring sustainable funding across the province and the new WSA?
- What recommendations can you offer to the CRWR to build financial resiliency and secure sustainable financing?
- Botelho: First, I would say that your examples are what everyone needs to hear. Talk to others about your lessons learned. Think about the need for local champions and local politicians, to recognize how critical watershed sustainability [and therefore your financial sustainability] is in helping them meet their mandate. Second, and this is a no-brainer, you need diverse funding sources. We use that in our personal financial lives and we need to use it in this context, too. Finally, focus on your unique context. Each context offers different opportunities and challenges. There's no other watershed like the Coquitlam River, so you need to define that for people as a way of helping to attract funding and build financial resiliency.
- Steve: I'd say you're really on the right track, and I'm very impressed. Further to Zita's comments, I'd say that, as well as local champions, if you go through a process like a referendum, you need public support, and that means you need to design and implement a public communication process so that, when the time comes to ask people for their response to a referendum, they'll say yes.
- Julie: I put a lot of emphasis on political champions. To get to yes at our referendum, we required people on the committee to go out and do the door knocking and explain why we

needed to invest in our drinking water and watershed protection. We did a lot of work on community outreach, and drumming up support. It wasn't a resounding yes, at just 52% of folks who voted, so you're taking a big chance. If you put yourselves out there and you get a no, where do you go from there? That means doing education programs, data collection, rebate programs, and so on. You need to produce a long-term data set around stream water quality and groundwater quality, so you need to incorporate a citizen science aspect. If the Province sees that you have a program in place and you have a plan, they're more likely to buy in and provide the funding. I'll end on the note that, because we have long term funding, we are working on building long-term, meaningful partnerships with First Nations. Working from grant to grant doesn't provide the foundation necessary to build those relationships.

### **Q&A:**

Hall then opened the panel to questions from participants.

(For Pisani) You spoke about ecosystem values. What do you mean by that?

- There are community values and there are ecosystem values, and our programs are married to both. Activities in our region require good water quality, good flow in the rivers, providing habitat for fish and in wetlands, so we're looking at a tapestry of land uses.

(General) What are we going to do about using freshwater for grey water purposes? Can any initiatives deal with our need to be more efficient in using freshwater?

- Steve: That's a great suggestion. I agree we waste a lot of potable water, but we need to build up people's comfort level with the idea of using grey water. It took time for people to become comfortable with using lake water, and it will take time with grey water. You have to go through a process of trying it out, testing it and proving it will work.
- Julie: Above and beyond comfort levels, there's a regulatory piece in BC's building code that has to be in place, and the Ministry of Health has to be involved. The Health Ministry put out a manual or guiding framework last year outline the parameters for using grey water, composting toilets, and so on. There has to be more of that.

## **Session 1.2. Breakout Groups: Exploring Sustainable Funding**

Participants broke into groups to discuss ideas for reaching two goals:

**Goal 1: Identify support for particular funding mechanisms or approaches, with regard to which would be the easiest for the CRWR and why, and what unique opportunities might exist in the CR watershed.**

Thoughts coming from this group included:

- Approaching regional resource extraction companies for funds to support restoration from, for example, forestry



- Thinking not only about development and development companies, but about redevelopment, as much of the stock of housing built in the 50s and 60s is now being demolished and replaced
- Pursuing provincial funding, but remembering regional funding with the caveat that the GVRD is large and people in Point Grey may not be concerned with what happens with the Coquitlam River watershed
- Considering the idea of a parcel tax, although it could be challenging politically, or perhaps water and utility fees

**Goal 2: Identify key activities the CRWR must do over the short term (i.e. the next 6 months) to secure long-term funding.**

Thoughts coming from this group included:

- Thinking in terms of investors rather than funders, so who are the groups that would be interested in investing in watershed sustainability over the short term
- Doing more self-promotion with potential investors in mind, such as by celebrating successes, which helps investors understand what they're getting for their money
- Identifying potential government investors:
  - Government at all levels, with local government support being critical
  - First Nations governments
  - Strata councils
- Identifying potential private sector investors:
  - Land developers
  - BC Hydro
  - Forestry companies
  - The aggregate industry
- Making "the ask" specific

**Goal 1 Report Back**

*Julie Pisani and Steve Litke*

Pisani said that her group started with a discussion on a parcel tax and why what worked in Nanaimo might not work in Coquitlam and Port Coquitlam. Although people pay for other long-term services, like garbage collection, with two cities in the watershed, they would need to partner on a parcel tax and there might be conflicting interests. That said, a parcel tax would be more of a systems approach rather than siloing municipalities.

There was also the question of whether such a tax should be a flat rate or a variable rate based on assessed value, and which would be more equitable? This led to talking more about water utility fees. In NRD, some people are customers of the water utility while others have their own wells. In the Coquitlam River watershed, there is no water metering so it would be hard to find a way to be equitable. Also, Metro Vancouver manages drinking water, with a regional resource extraction levy—a fee for water

extraction that all users will benefit from. Within MV as a whole, residents benefit from water extraction from CR.

Lastly, there was a novel suggestion about considering a watershed charter, something like a sustainability charter. It might say something like, “We as a company have signed on to this watershed charter and have pledged \$200 per year that goes into water sustainability measures.” This raised questions regarding administrative issues, but it’s an innovative idea.

Litke said the CRWR needs to continue to learn from others like Nanaimo and Nechako. It’s vital to communicate the local importance or watershed protection so people know why it should be important to them, and that’s not only about the message delivered but the method of delivery. With regards to municipal and parcel taxes, they didn’t get as far as the other group but felt that assessed value would be the best way to go as it is easier to demonstrate benefits at the municipal level than regionally. Also, a parcel tax provides an opportunity to educate and get feedback as well.

## **Goal 2 Report Back**

*Trish Hall and Zita Botelho*

Botelho said the key thought emerging from this group about short-term funding sources was the need to do self-promotion to define the audiences. The group defined various audiences and then asked, what needs to be done to engage them? A parcel tax would provide significant support for the CRWR, but it will require a groundswell of support to make it happen, so what would such an outreach strategy look like? Ideas include handing out leaflets at farmer’s markets, making presentations at fish and wildlife groups and birdwatcher groups, and so on. The key is to ensure that each aspect of outreach is strategically targeted to a particular group.

Hall added that it’s important to be clear about scale when talking about something like a parcel tax. People hear the word tax and panic, so it’s important to be clear what and how much we’re asking for. “Less than a latte!” would be an excellent tagline to emphasize that the amount would be relatively small per person, but combined it would go a long way to achieving sustainability in the Coquitlam River watershed.

## **Session 2. Progress Report and Next Steps: LCRWP, Implementation Update**

*Margaret Birch, CRWR Core Committee Member*

*Deborah Carlson, West Coast Environmental Law*

Access PowerPoint slides of the [LCRWP Implementation Update](#) and [Deborah Carlson’s presentation](#). View the [video of this session](#).

For the first part of this session, CRWR core committee member Margaret Birch provided an overview of what's been happening with the CRWR since the last public meeting. Giving a brief review of the last 3 years, she then directed participants who were new to the roundtable to handouts that provide an overview of the CRWR, its mission, values, guiding principles, and core committee.

Birch then reviewed the various pressures on the watershed and the relative importance the CRWR has assessed for each of them, as follows:

- Storm water (high)
- Development (high)
- Invasive species (high)
- Recreation (medium)
- Vandalism (medium)
- Water extraction (medium)
- Mainstream cultural norms (medium)
- Mining (low)

The first three pressures are of the highest importance. Just this week, the CRWR received funding from BC Freshwater Legacy Development, and last week from the City of Coquitlam, to address these three pressures. Last year the CRWR worked with UVic's Environmental Law Centre, which then published a report called the Lower CR Watershed Plan: Tools for a Healthy Watershed and Healthy Humans.

Future work includes working with the Cities of Port Coquitlam and Coquitlam, Metro Vancouver, and the Kwikwetlem First Nation to identify key points of alignment between the watershed plan, official community plans, and environmental plans. The goal is to engage the community through outreach and educational opportunities to promote stewardship and watershed health, and to help with actions to address invasive species in natural and riparian areas. The CRWR is currently working with the development community to advance the goals of the watershed plan, as well as to initiate research and actions to address the impact of water extraction on flows for fish in the lower Coquitlam River.

Birch introduced Deborah Carlson to provide thoughts on next steps. A staff lawyer for the Green Communities program at West Coast Environmental Law (WCEL), she focuses on collaborative governance and planning, and enabling ecosystem-based management in an urban context.

Carlson noted that as a nonprofit that's been around for 40 years, WCEL understands funding challenges. For example, the organization currently employs 20 people, but when she joined in 2010 there were only about 6. "Maintaining core funding is always a battle." Having recently attended a strategic planning session, she said one of their key focuses going forward will be collaborating with other organizations.

She then said her talk would address rainwater management in redevelopment, with collaborative implementation. There's a distinction between planning and making plans happen. CRWR is operating from a position of strength because they've been around for several years, and Metro Vancouver requires watershed planning at the local government level. CRWR has had some "stealth environmental successes" in the region, and having that backing provides support when seeking funding.

When considering rainwater management in urban areas, we have to work with science, local knowledge, and respect for Indigenous knowledge, as well as with ways to manage at different scales in an integrated way, among other things. Ultimately, the goal is to protect and restore natural green

infrastructure, but also to promote engineered green infrastructure that mimics the natural hydrologic regime because we've already lost so much of our natural infrastructure. Scales of implementation include the site level (i.e. where we live), the neighbourhood level, and the watershed level.

At the watershed scale, we have OCPs (which provide long-term policies to guide decision making and regulation), mapping of sensitive ecosystems, building of strategies that incorporate biodiversity and concentrate development away from sensitive ecosystems, and goals to build green infrastructure.

Development permits provide a crossover place between watershed and site scales. They are a useful tool to protect the environment and work toward water conservation, but we have to recognize the need to include upland issues. One of the first calls she took when she started at WCEL involved a situation in which a positive plan was in place but crashed because the community pushed back. This led to a need to work with the development community. On the other hand, in Kelowna, the city mapped out areas where they didn't want development to occur and fast-tracked development in areas where they wanted it, making it easy for developers to build where there was less environmental impact.

Zoning can also be useful in that it can be combined with requirements for runoff and landscaping. Consider the District of West Vancouver where a developer did landscaping that was almost entirely washed away because it didn't work with local patterns of rainwater runoff. If development impacts are built into zoning bylaws, this doesn't need to happen. Instead, we can write in terms that reduce erosion on slopes and deal with rainwater management.

An important question is, how do we know when our efforts are working? There's "no magical answer," Carlson said, but it comes back to having a cumulative impact map. While this is not a priority for CRWR at the moment in terms of funding, it will be important to keep in mind over the long term. Also, with the addition of adaptive storm water management, you can keep an eye on the big picture in ways that some of the regulators won't and that can help over the long term. In the Bulkley Valley, they are providing protection from watershed development through a monitoring trust. The people responsible for administering this area represent local government and organizations.

Other jurisdictions beyond Canada have come up with some novel ideas for watershed protection. The Whanganui River in New Zealand is recognized as a legal person because the health and wellbeing of the people living by the river is intrinsically connected to the health of the river itself, an idea that flowed from the Maori rather than Western law. Two people have been appointed to speak on behalf of the river, one from the Iwi and one from the Crown.

Another thought is "effective collaboration for implementation." This is a strategic planning approach in which different "nodes" involved in a problem come together to discuss what they're going to do, go off and do it, and then come back together to discuss how it went and plan next steps. Then the cycle begins again. This creates quite a "nimble approach" to collaboration.

## Q&A:

Q: A wonderful lawyer who spoke at the salmon enhancement conference regarded fish as intrinsically attached to watershed, and the need to find ways to conceptualize that attachment here. Are you finding that other people are speaking to that also?

- Carlson: Yes, absolutely. It's key. It's a way into the conversation with people who are interested in fish and wildlife, and with First Nations. We're currently in a holding pattern because we're waiting for changes to the fisheries act, which will be tabled in the fall. We're hoping for stronger protections for fish habitat because loss of protection in the last iteration was not good. Having DFO backing in previous years was very helpful in our work.

Q: Can you speak more about the monitoring trust, like who pays into it and what the process is?

- Litke: There has to be a clear focus around monitoring research and data, and there's "an elegance" to doing that outside of decision-making and planning conflicts. Obviously, the information has to inform the decisions. Let's say for now, it took some time.

Q: Are you focusing on links between local government and human well-being? I think those things are important for groups like this to highlight, and to feed back into local government.

- Carlson: There are different ways into it. I'm aware of programs that have been working from this angle for several years. But, absolutely, having links with nature in an urban environment is important to health, even if it's just having a tree outside the window.

## Session 3. Conversation on the Water Sustainability Act

Dr. Craig Orr, Fisheries Resource specialist for the Kwikwetlem First Nation, introduced the final two speakers for the day. Rosie Simms has been the water and law policy researcher and coordinator at the POLIS Water Sustainability Project since 2015. She has an MA from the Institute for Resources, Environment, and Sustainability at UBC and her work focuses on water and Indigenous governance. Coree Tull is the organizing director for the Canadian Freshwater Alliance. She has been engaging with communities and encouraging collaboration amongst stakeholders for a decade. She has a B. Tech from BCIT and a BA in environmental geography and international relations from UBC.

### Water Sustainability Act

*Rosie Simms, POLIS Project on Ecological Governance*

[Access PowerPoint slides](#) and view the [video of this session](#).

Providing a quick overview of her presentation on the Water Sustainability Act, Simms identified the highlights as:

- Drivers of water law

- Evolution of water law
- Core WSA elements and opportunities

She promised to drive home 3 key messages:

- Getting water management is critical to everything.
- New WSA provides more robust legal framework and is one of many tools to advance sustainability.
- There are several key areas of opportunity.

According to a recent report, BC faces five major and pressing water challenges:

1. Building resilience during floods , which are becoming more frequent and serious
2. Sustaining water for nature, considering volume, timing, and quality for fish and ecosystem health
3. Decision making
4. Drinking water
5. Reconciling water energy nexus in time of changing climate

The former provincial act dates back to 1909 and hadn't been updated, so it was tailored to water for resource extraction, ignored environmental issues and First Nations rights. "It was basically a kindergarten rule of first come, first served," she said.

The new WSA was written to address:

- The "trouble in the water" and the need for a new set of tools
- The presence of strong public support for water protection paired with a lack of confidence that we're doing it well
- A policy window that, combined with political commitments made in early 2000s, bumped water up on the agenda. These included:
  - The 2008 living water smart strategy
  - The 2009-14 modernization of the Water Act

In 2016, the WSA phase 1 regulations ensuring water sustainability through groundwater protection and dam safety were enacted. In 2017 and beyond, the WSA phase 2 regulations will be enacted, with the most promising pieces yet to come.

"The WSA is in force but it's a work in progress," she said. Many pieces of legislation touch on water sustainability, and we need to find ways to make them work together. In many ways, the new WSA is not that different from the old Water Act. For example, the first come, first served principle remains and has been extended to groundwater. The Act asserts Crown ownership, but fails to explicitly acknowledge First Nations water rights. In fact, it largely deals with allocation and quantity.

A key aspect is that groundwater is now regulated. As of last year, all nondomestic groundwater users must have a licence and pay fees. There is a 3-year transition period for existing licences, but gaps in data around this are posing problems.

There are also new terms regarding fees and rentals. These range, depending on water use, up to a maximum of \$2.25 per mill litres of water (administrative fees only). The same fees apply to surface and groundwater domestic uses.

The Act also provides better protection for environmental flows—that is, the quantity, timing, and quality of water flows required to sustain freshwater ecosystems and human livelihoods that depend on these ecosystems. There are key links between environmental flows and First Nations rights and uses. And an important question is, how much water does a river need? There is no single number that will remain static, because different flows are required at different times of year. The province had limited protection in places through regional fish protection policies, but now must consider flows when issuing new nondomestic licences, critical environmental flow, and fish population protection orders. Concerns exist regarding what decision makers are considering and how they will accomplish it, but there are also limited opportunities to amend existing licences, such as if it's discovered a river is overdrawn.

In Phase 2 we'll see:

1. Water objectives linking land and water decision making with an ability to set objectives for quality, quantity, and aquatic ecosystem needs.
2. A spectrum of planning options, such as water sustainability plans triggered by conflict and tailor made to regional licences, and with the ability to be binding and to change licences.
3. Area-based regulations designated to specific areas and creating unique thresholds and requirements for those places.
4. Delegated governance and advisory boards, with more opportunities for local decision making, or to designate decision making to other persons or entities. For example, the minister may establish an advisory board to provide advice on water objectives and methods for determining environmental flows and best practices for water use.

Ultimately, Simms concluded, the WSA heralds a shift in how we see water management, links the land and water, provides a chaperoned partnership approach with some flexibility in our changing climate, and with more opportunities for management interventions, such as drought orders.

## **Canadian Freshwater Alliance**

*Coree Tull, Canadian Freshwater Alliance*

[Access PowerPoint slides](#) and view the [video of this session](#).

Tull described Our Water BC as a collaborative campaign to drive action around the WSA and other water tools at all levels of government. It started several years ago, “went dark for a while,” but came back to life before the provincial election. It's now building up to create a provincial freshwater narrative and drive the conversation.

“During the election, we hosted conversations, some here in the Tri Cities area, to ensure candidates understand the local issues and to begin to build local water champions,” Tull said. The goal is to engage British Columbians to understand the issues and become involved. Water in BC is facing unprecedented threats from industrial activity, population pressure, and a changing climate.

“This is BC’s water moment,” she said. The BC NDP made specific commitments regarding water. The Greens did, too, but fewer, and the Liberals made the fewest. The point is that we need to get commitments embedded in platforms to help drive public education and engage community members in these important issues. Ninety-three percent of British Columbians agree that freshwater is our most precious resource. According to surveys, awareness of water issues increased significantly among all Canadians in the 25 years from 1988 to 2013, and it is predicted they will increase significantly in the 25 years from 2013 to 2038. But by far the greatest drop in confidence over the conditions of the precious resource in the future exists among British Columbians.

The most important water issues to British Columbians include:

- Water quality, at 36%
- Local community control of water, at 30%
- Sharing with First Nations, at 17%
- Water quality, at 11%
- Water pricing, at 6%

The diversity of stakeholders in this room speaks to the importance of water issues to a broad cross-section of British Columbians, and that’s a huge tool for advancing the issues.

“So what do we do with this?” Tull asked. “We localize it!” We do this by creating a BC freshwater narrative centred around local water challenges. We use this to build a network across BC where we’re talking about bigger issues but at a local level. A big piece of this is storytelling, which is how we tap into local values. For example, when we ask questions such as “What does water mean to us?” the answers include things like joy, livelihood, and healthy communities. “It’s all about feeling safe and secure in our families and communities, and when people get that we can take our work to a whole other level.”

On a local level, we can do this by sharing perspectives, making personal and local connections and both offering and listening to diverse voices. When we connect through outreach events, we begin to bridge issues and our impact grows significantly. If we can bridge the gaps between local and provincial for our audience, it really brings them on board.

We need to come together to think about how these problems can be solved with specific recommendations, keep our call to action clear and simple, and show people how can participate. If we do all this, we’ll see and celebrate our successes and become a force to be reckoned with.

#### **Q&A:**

Q: What is the provincial role in watershed management in Coquitlam?



- Simms: The WSA regulations for monitoring and reporting are part of phase 2.

Q: Isn't all of this irrelevant if you don't know how much water people are using?

- Simms: It depends on the situation and what other measures are in place. Large groundwater users are required to measure and report their water use, but we're currently dealing with how they will do this. For example, there are concerns about the Kokanee in the eastern Fraser Valley. The Nestle water plant is 200 yards upstream of groundwater streams, so if we don't know how much water they're using, we can't develop criteria for ecological impact.
- Tull: I agree. We're still waiting for some of that to come through, but that's a major gap in our knowledge.

Q: With the new Act, will Nestle be required to apply for a licence, and will they have to ask for a certain volume of water and then report back as to whether they're meeting their licence requirements to show they're not taking more than their licence allows. It seems like there's a need to rely on both monitoring of groundwater extraction and of water levels in the rivers.

- Tull: The first job is to get users into the system because, until they're there, you can't even get started on monitoring.
- Simms: There's a disconnect between the way water is allocated on paper and the way it's actually used.

Q: There's a constant onus with all these water act referrals, some quite onerous. As a result, what's learned often doesn't get shared. For example, parking lot problems in Surrey don't get shared over to PoCo. Where's the responsibility for people to share information across boundaries?

- Tull: There are burdens on many communities, and also issues around reconciliation, but it's very local in terms of what relationships can be and where the capacity for changes are.
- Botelho: A lot of responses seem inadequate because there's such a burden of requests. Among yourselves and where it's within your authority and power to do something, there are provisions that allow many things to happen locally. Funding is an important priority, but it's also possible to leverage information. How can you optimize what you've got and use it at the local level? What have you been doing that you can keep on doing? You can't wait around for senior levels of government to fix the problems. A lot of us are turning grey waiting for that to happen.

Q: Before 1910, the province provided water licences to the Vancouver power corporation, which then built a dam. That licence is now held by BC Hydro. But the kind of flexibility that offers may not be quite as available in the Coquitlam River watershed.

- Litke: It's different with the Capilano watershed, where the licence was designated to Vancouver. But Coquitlam is now part of Metro Vancouver, and there are parallels with other areas where they're under the jurisdiction of larger bodies. Depending on the way local histories have evolved, there may be different players who need to come to table to deal with the issues.

Q: Does the Navigability Act supercede Water Act?

- Tull: The Navigability Act is federal where the Water Act is provincial, so that issue would only arise if there were a conflict between the two. I'm not sure what would happen in that situation.

## Closing Remarks

Melissa Dick closed the question period and thanked everyone for coming. "It was an ambitious agenda and we've covered a lot of ground," she said. The next step is to finish the business proposal and bring it to the Core Committee.

She noted that the CRWR holds an event like this annually, but they do want to keep people involved. There is a Core Committee meeting every two months, she said, noting that there would be a meeting immediately after the event ended. And she invited anyone who wanted to provide feedback to refer to the contact information provided in the information package.

## Materials Provided in Meeting Package

- Community Meeting Agenda
- Photos and biographies of keynote and guest speakers
- CRWR Overview Backgrounder 2016-2017
- Lower Coquitlam River Watershed Plan Implementation 2016 Going Forward
- Excerpt from DRAFT Business Proposal: Securing Sustainable Financing and Capacity in the Coquitlam River Watershed
- Municipal/Regional/Provincial Government Funding Mechanism options summary
- Summary graphic of Roundtable progress to Build Resilience & Capacity; Advance Watershed Plan; Research and Knowledge Sharing; and Funding/Budget Activities July 2016 – June 2017
- Breakout Group Activities summary
- Meeting Feedback Form

## Participants

Total number of attendees = 54

	NAME		SECTOR	AFFILITATION
1	Moore	Jasmine	Arts and Culture	Coquitlam Heritage
2	Carroll	Sherry	Arts and Culture	ArtsConnect
3	Fournier	Julie	BC Hydro	FWCP
4	Smecher	Karen	Communications	Green Channel
5	Roppel	David	Development	Beedie Living
6	Chisholm	Blaire	Development	Brook Pooni Associates

7	Rosenau	Marvin	Education	BCIT
8	Luscombe	Alex	Education	Student
9	Tyrrell	Khadijah	Education	UBC
10	Carlson	Deborah	Environmental / Legal Organization	West Coast Environmental Law
11	Cristoffani	Florencia	Environmental Consultant, Arts and Culture	Generation Maintenance, ARTicipation
12	Popa	Ioana	Environmental Consultant	Generation Maintenance
13	Lewis	John	Environmental Consultant, Arts and Culture	Generation Maintenance, ARTicipation
14	Dowdall	Stephanie	Environmental Consultant	Generation Maintenance
15	Tull	Coree	Environmental Organization	Canadian Freshwater Alliance
16	Litke	Steve	Environmental Organization	Fraser Basin Council
17	Stephens	Kim	Environmental Organization	Partnership for Water Sustainability in BC
18	Simms	Rosie	Environmental Organization	POLIS Project
19	Botelho	Zita	Environmental Organization	Sustainable Funding for Watershed Governance Initiatives
20	Hall	Trish	Environmental Organization	Watershed Watch Salmon Society
21	Boutilier	Sarah	Environmental Organization	Watershed Watch Salmon Society, CRWR, Maple Creek Streamkeepers
22	Ducharme	Scott	Federal Government	DFO
23	Donnelly	Fin	Federal Parliament	MP Port Moody-Coquitlam
24	Taylor	Kelsey	First Nations	Kwikwetlem First Nation
25	Orr	Craig	First Nations, Advocacy	Kwikwetlem First Nation, Watershed Watch Salmon Society
26	Furman	Nicholas	Local Business	Vancity
27	Devlin	Susan	Local Business	Vancity
28	Wilson	Chris	Local Municipality	City of Coquitlam
29	Birch	Margaret	Local Municipality	City of Coquitlam
30	Warriner	Steffanie	Local Municipality	City of Coquitlam
31	Shaw	Jay	Local Municipality	City of Coquitlam
32	MacEachern	Neil	Local Municipality	City of Port Coquitlam
33	Greenland	Bill	Local Municipality	Healthy Community Committee (PoCo)
34	Matthews	Linda	Provincial Parliament	Assistant to Joan Isaacs MLA Coquitlam-Burke Mountain
35	Isaacs	Joan	Provincial Parliament	MLA Coquitlam-Burke Mountain
36	Robinson	Selina	Provincial Parliament	MLA Coquitlam-Maillardville
37	Montgomery	Jesse	Regional Government	Metro Vancouver

38	Pisani	Julie	Regional Government	Regional District of Nanaimo
39	Green	Tracy	Stewardship	BIMES
40	Willis	Elaine	Stewardship	Tri-City Green Council
41	Fletcher	Norm	Stewardship	Grist Goesen Memorial Hatchery
42	Rudd	Jeff	Stewardship	Maple Creek Streamkeeper
43	Budd	Sandy	Stewardship	Maple Creek Streamkeeper
44	Ryan	Kevin	Stewardship	Mossom Hatchery/BIMES
45	Zevit	Pamela	Stewardship	South Coast Conservation Program
46	Dick	Melissa	Watershed Organization	CRWR
47	Piikkila	Erik	Watershed Organization	Green Blue, Vancouver Island Water Watch Coalition
48	Simpson	Diane	Watershed Resident	Watershed resident
49	Greenland	Karen	Watershed Resident	Watershed resident
50	von Sacken	Rosanna	Watershed Resident	Watershed resident
51	Razzaghi	Vahed	Watershed Resident	Watershed resident
52	Basa	Virgilio	Watershed Resident	Watershed resident
53	Razzaghi	Bonnie	Watershed Resident	Watershed resident
54	Lewis	Gordon	Watershed Resident	Watershed resident

## Thanks

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- Photographer
- Roundtable participants