

StreamTalk

The newsletter for stewards of salmonids and their habitat • Volume 16 • Number 2 • Fall 2009

Something FISHY

by Lynda Chambers

Sometimes, the wetter the weather the better – and on July 8 that was particularly true when over 40 visitors mustered in the rain at Royal Roads University in Victoria. “Something Fishy at RRU” was a lively learning program for kids of all ages. It drew staff, faculty, and the general public, all eager to see a fish ladder, run a watershed model and learn to fish.

Spirits were not dampened at all by the grey skies that spit rain on us most of the day. University archivist Sarah Holland launched the morning’s walk and talk with pizzazz, quickly engaging curious 8-to-12-year-olds with the story of Hatley Castle, now part of the university. “I’m still chuckling over the funny things the kids said, like asking if James Dunsmuir (who built Hatley Castle) had his own Dairy Queen,” says Holland.

Next stop was the ancient fish ladders, which have recently been repaired thanks to support from TD Friends of the Environment Foundation. New cement “baffles” will restore access to trout from

Esquimalt Lagoon, that used to use the ladder to get to spawning areas further inland.

The question on everyone’s minds was whether trout had returned. Volunteer fish monitors Beth Mitchell and Joe Richardson of the Esquimalt Lagoon Stewardship Initiative raised traps placed the day before. There was good news and bad news. There were no trout in the traps, but they were splashing and jumping nearby.

Next, everyone was invited to play the role of a rain cloud over an intricately designed scale model of the region. It was complete with little houses, boats in the lagoon and a large crab near the miniature shore. The role entailed energetically squirting water from a bottle over all the lawns and driveways and roofs to see where it all ended up. Kool-Aid powder had been sprinkled on first and represented pesticides, poisons and other detritus that generally accumulates in a community.

It became clear that all streams, ditches and slopes led to the ocean, where the tide quickly grew murky. Samantha Wilde from Stream Team provided commentary while fending off attempts to peel some of the petite and irresistible plastic boats from their moorings.

In the afternoon, guests returned – some after a picnic lunch – to learn how to fish. This program was the result of a collaboration with Natalie West of the Freshwater Fisheries Society of BC and her two superb facilitators, Mike and Matt. Several young people reeled in some fish but no one, including our fish experts, could identify what species they’d hooked.



Senior staff at Royal Roads know that it is essential to be appropriately attired for occasions such as this.

Something Fishy at RRU was the result of an ad hoc partnership that brought together the talents and creative minds of many members of the RRU community. Special thanks also go to community liaison biologist Joanne Day, education coordinator Don Lowen and field administrators Penny Doswell and Kathleen McNair – all of DFO. They provided direction, ideas and great giveaways. Kudos as well to Esquimalt Lagoon Stewardship Coordinator Kittie Lloyd (Capital Regional District); summer camp supervisor Jen Buxbaum of West Shore Parks and Recreation and Natalie West of the Freshwater Fisheries Society.

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The fish ladders were part of the original 1912-14 landscape design at Hatley Castle.

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A holistic approach to sustainable watersheds

by Alan Lill

Since April 2006, BC's \$21 million Living Rivers Trust Fund (LRTF) has been supporting three business plans that are creating a legacy founded on healthy watersheds, sustainable ecosystems and thriving communities. These are the Fraser Salmon and Watersheds Program (FSWP), Living Rivers – Georgia Basin/Vancouver Island (LR-GB/VI) and a more recent plan on the Skeena.

On BC's south coast, declines in chinook, coho and steelhead have been linked to sharply reduced ocean survival combined with impaired freshwater habitat. The latter reflects more than 100 years of urban and industrial development, as well as more frequent weather extremes, especially summer/early fall droughts that are exacerbated by climate change.

The LR-GB/VI initially focused on watersheds tributary to Georgia Basin (except for the Fraser). It

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Something fishy

We would not have been celebrating the return of the trout, of course, without TD Friends of the Environment and the hard work of the university's grounds and gardens manager David Rutherford and his team – with a special mention to Greg Higgs – who did the gritty, cold, wet work last fall to divert the water and repair the concrete baffles that make up the fish ladder rungs.

There was just one problem with Something Fishy at RRU. More than once, we were asked “when is the next one?” And that includes a query from a reporter at CBC radio who called in to say he was sorry he missed the day's event but will be there for the second instalment. Sorry, fish fans... the celebration was a unique tribute to the power of one small but effective contribution from TD Friends of the Environment Foundation.



Replacement of an old fish ladder at Cameron Lake is an example of Living Rivers at work.

expanded to include all of Vancouver Island in 2007 and again in 2008 to include a First Nations Legacy component. The \$5.9 million in LRTF funding from 2006 through 2009/10 inclusive will be supplemented by approximately \$9 million invested by partner organizations. These funds support improved management of watersheds for the health of fish, aquatic environments and the people who appreciate and use those resources. Every project is carefully chosen for its strategic value in building partnerships and sharing costs, as well as its technical merit and how it supports overall recovery of priority watersheds.

The BC Conservation Foundation manages the overall LR-GB/VI initiative and is accountable to its Partnership and Steering Committee. Members are drawn from a wide range of interests and include familiar faces such as Zo Ann Morten of the Pacific Streamkeepers Federation. LR-GB/VI has also invested \$100,000 a year in the Pacific Salmon Foundation's Community Salmon Program, effectively doubling funding for up to 30 projects each year.

The success we have enjoyed comes through the dedication of many people. The largest single project to date has been the multi-partnered \$1

million Stoltz slide remediation on the Cowichan River that received a National Rivers Conservation Award at the Sixth Canadian River Heritage Conference in Ottawa in June.

Our goal is to create a legacy of enduring partnerships, scientific excellence and “on-the-ground” achievements. There is great potential for improved watershed management in a modernized BC Water Act and so we are working to facilitate adoption of BC's Living Water Smart program. We are excited about the response from First Nations to more fully engage in watershed management and restoration.

We hope the Living Rivers Trust Fund will be extended into the future enabling LR-GB/VI and its partners to continue with this important work beyond 2010. For more information please check out www.livingrivers.ca.

Shake it, baby, shake it!

Matt Casselman captured a joyful moment at the Seymour Hatchery in this YouTube video. Watch it at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jgp6OjprQo>. Make sure you have your volume turned up!



Salmon swim into Nechako Lakes classrooms

by Chris Mushumanski

School District 91, Nechako Lakes, began a new initiative last year to encourage schools and teachers to bring salmon and salmon issues into the classroom, and to bring students out into the world of salmon.

SD 91 has a large number of salmon streams, including crucial spawning grounds, within its boundaries, so



"Ready or not, aquatic insects...here I come!"

it only makes sense that salmon swim their way into every classroom! SD 91 is very pleased to partner with the Pacific Salmon Foundation, Rio Tinto Alcan, the Nechako Valley Sporting Association Fish and Game Club, DFO and local First Nations.

A part-time coordinator position was created for an SD 91 teacher, and three main goals were established: to locate K-12 resources and link them to curriculum; to forge partnerships with community groups to allow schools to participate in monitoring and restoration projects that benefit salmon and salmon habitat; and to integrate traditional First Nations knowledge.



Nechako Lakes children on the loose to learn.

Examples include three classes participating in the Salmonids in the Classroom program with plans to make it eight next year; the purchase of two education kits based on the Streamkeepers program for classes to use on field trips; a professional development day for teachers with information on available programs and presentations and how to use Streamkeepers kits; and nine field trips to fish-bearing streams where students used the kits to monitor water quality. Some of this data is helping in a long-

term project to restore Murray Creek in Vanderhoof.

We are very excited about the upcoming school year as this initiative continues to grow. Opportunities for teachers and students include connections to wetlands and a partnership with Ducks Unlimited, monitoring salmon streams in our district, and a growing awareness of this invaluable resource. For more information, please email the SD 91 fish education coordinator at cmushumanski@mail.sd91.bc.ca.

First run of Pink Salmon Festival a success

by Michael Meneer

Vancouver served up some perfect weather for the first Pink Salmon Festival, hosted by the Pacific Salmon Foundation (PSF) at Vancouver's Vanier/ Haddon Park on August 30. The festival was inspired by record forecasted returns of 15 to 20 million pink salmon, which are so important to the West Coast ecosystem, to the Fraser River.

About 2,500 people attended to sample barbequed pink salmon and hors d'oeuvres prepared by premier Vancouver chefs from Nu, Raincity Grill and C Restaurants, and celebrity chef Rockin' Ronnie Shewchuk. The over 2,000 pounds of pink salmon were donated by the Seafood Producers Association of B.C. and the Canadian Fishing Company.

Donors to the foundation were treated to a wine pairing sponsored by the Mark Anthony Group, which donated a 2008 White Bear Sauvignon Blanc and a Painted Turtle Pinot Noir. Mark Anthony Group donates the proceeds from sales of these labels to environmental causes.

Music by Highrise Lonesome and Up Your Watershed accompanied magic shows, fly fishing demonstrations, sea life exhibitions, Stream of Dreams fish painting and Angela Brown's story telling.





Ah, the 21st century! There are so many ways for us to share our findings: you can tell your neighbour, you can bring your data sets to meetings, you can produce posters and displays for conferences and community events and your information can be entered into the DFO Streamkeepers Data Entry Tool to share online or produce hard copy reports. All of the above can easily be accomplished by any member of your group. The winter "resting season" is the ideal opportunity to take your information and creatively showcase it in preparation for spring community events. Have fun with this: use lots of different media, quilts, posters and models.

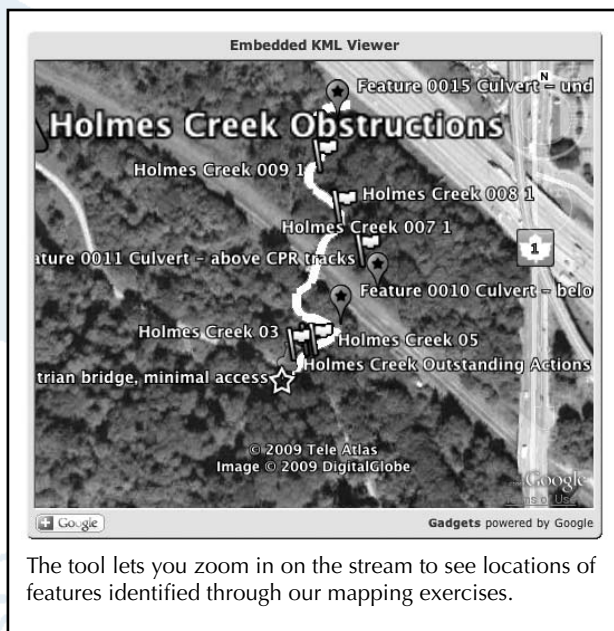
Fly over our streams

Have your group's IT nerd check out what's possible using Google Earth!

Go to <http://www.pskf.ca/program/case/impediments/index.html> then click on a stream.

Streamkeepers Federation received funding through the Fraser Salmon and Watersheds Program to conduct Streamkeepers mapping exercises. Using protocols in Modules One and Two, we verified where there are impediments to fish passage and surveyed habitat that may be inaccessible to salmon. Module Two results in an assessment score and the identification of limiting factors within each section of stream. Modules Three and Four, water quality testing through chemical analysis and invertebrate sampling, let us determine whether

water quality was such that fish returning to the area would be able to thrive, not merely survive. This information has been uploaded to the Streamkeepers Data Entry Tool. The GPS readings and photos have been put into Google Earth to allow armchair stream stewards the chance to fly through our waterways.



The tool lets you zoom in on the stream to see locations of features identified through our mapping exercises.



Jim McCarthy honoured

"People who volunteer discover many personal and professional benefits such as the satisfaction of contributing to their community, meeting wonderful people, and developing lasting friendships."

~ Jim McCarthy

West Vancouver Streamkeeper founding member Jim McCarthy is receiving much-merited recognition for his volunteer work this year. He is one of six community volunteers who are currently being acknowledged on West Vancouver Municipal Hall's "Wall of Acclaim". Not only that, he has received the British Columbia Community Achievement Award. This was presented to him in March by Lieutenant Governor Steven Point and Premier Gordon Campbell.

With his passion for working with people, corporations and volunteers, "Mr. Coho", as he's affectionately known, had a major role in forging the Coho Society of the North Shore into a vibrant and highly respected organization. After 20 years as director, 12 of them as president, he credits cooperation among environmental partners for bringing wild salmon back to several West Vancouver streams.



www.watershedwise.ca

Watershed Wise announces that its website is now up and running. Based in Coquitlam, the program offers environmental stewardship education to everyone from schoolchildren to municipal politicians and environmentally aware businesses.

www.bowen hatchery.org

Visit this site for a photo-visit of Bowen Island Hatchery, which is operated by the Bowen Island Fish and Wildlife Club. The building was built by Bowen Volunteers. The main yearly funding for operation and training comes from a grant from DFO. You can also experience this year's Coho Bon Voyage at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S29CTU8Uk1s>

Gail Shea visits Howard English Hatchery

by Don Lowen

Members of the Goldstream Volunteer Salmonid Enhancement Association (GVSEA) hosted a luncheon for Minister of Fisheries and Oceans Gail Shea on July 10. The fare included salmon, of course, and the event took place at Howard English Hatchery, on the Goldstream River.

Minister Shea and her husband toured the hatchery, learning that GVSEA activities pre-date the Salmonid Enhancement Program, and that volunteers staff it six days a week all year round. The 85 members implement annual work plans concerning strategic enhancement, education, and habitat restoration.

The hatchery can incubate one million salmonids, and serves as a satellite re-stocking facility for the Reay, Mt. Douglas, Shawnigan, Colquitz, Craigflower, Millstream, Lyall, Grieg, Ganges and Fulford watersheds. Partners include DFO, Greater Victoria Water District, Capital Regional District, City of Langford, Goldstream Provincial Park, Province of BC, Tsawout First Nation, Mt. Doug Streamkeepers, and more.

GVSEA volunteers are proud of the fact that the hatchery provides 20,000 eggs for school programs, more than any other facility in BC – including major hatcheries. As an urban watershed that annually receives an average of 3,000 chum spawners, the Goldstream River's potential as a teaching tool is limitless. Tens of thousands witness the November return of chum. GVSEA volunteers serve as tour guides for schools and other groups, on the river and at the hatchery. Education/outreach partners include Habitat Acquisition Trust, Watership Foundation, Stream of Dreams, Goldstream Provincial Park, and public school districts.

GVSEA workplans have evolved over 40 years to include significant habitat restoration projects, in partnership with Tsawout First Nation, City of Langford, Goldstream Provincial Park, and the Capital Regional District.

At lunch, GVSEA chair John Mace emphasized that these projects rely on long-term contract technical support from DFO, as do most core community involvement and education activities regionally.



Minister Shea with a Stream of Dreams salmon. Photo: Micqualyn Waldie.

John informed the Minister that the future of the Community Involvement Program, and all program partners like GVSEA, rests on DFO community advisors' continued ability to enhance community capacity to reach goals that are shared by the department. Micqualyn Waldie and Don Lowen described the GVSEA's contribution to education initiatives, and Tom Rutherford provided his perspective on the importance of the role of the CA in supporting GVSEA and hundreds of similar organizations across British Columbia and the Yukon. Support of these projects with time and money – directly, consistently and without political interference – is essential to this unique and successful delivery model.

Above and beyond

To some DFO employees, stewardship is a vocation and a volunteer opportunity as well as a job. Their enthusiasm inspires respect, and, sometimes, awards. Congratulations to community advisors Joe Kambeitz and Mark Johnson, regional engineer for small craft harbours Adrian Rowland, and retired technician Hugh Naylor for special recognition they have recently received.

Joe Kambeitz received a community service award in June from the Pacific Federal Council, for his tireless and compassionate community service over the past 40 years. This includes his invention of the storm drain marking program and his creation of a bursary for students in BC who

are dedicated to the conservation and restoration of Pacific salmon and their habitat.

Mark Johnson was this year's recipient of an annual award presented jointly by the Fraser Basin Council and the Pacific Salmon Foundation for excellence in working to preserve, enhance and improve the Fraser River watershed and its populations of Pacific salmon.

Said David Marshall, executive director of the Fraser Basin Council, "Champions such as Mark are an inspiration to everyone who cares about the health of local watersheds and wants to find a way to lend a hand."

Adrian Rowland is the 2009 recipient of the Coho Society of the North Shore's Watershed Steward Award. Community advisor Rob Bell-Irving says, "His work directly motivated and inspired the West Vancouver Streamkeepers to form the West Vancouver Shoreline Preservation Society. In partnership with the Municipality of West Vancouver, it has now raised and applied close to \$200,000 in beneficial foreshore habitat restoration."

Hugh Naylor, a driving force of the Pemberton Wildlife Association, received DFO's National Recreational Fisheries Award for contributions to the conservation, restoration and enhancement of Canada's recreational fisheries and their habitat.



Learn by doing – and bring your hipwaders

by Carolyn Anne Budgell

BC Wildlife Federation's (BCWF) Wetlands Program conducted its fifth event of 2009 with a Wetlandkeepers course in Whistler, August 14-16. Community members practiced mapping a wetland, conducting plant and bird surveys and raising public awareness. This special Whistler section focused on forming recommendations for restoration of Lost Lake Wetland.

Funded by Canadian Wildlife Federation (CWF), Pacific Salmon Foundation and Shell Environmental Fund, participants from the Lower Mainland, the Sea to Sky corridor and Kamloops attended.

Michele Jones and Devon Moore led the field activities. Representatives from CWF filmed the course. Participants ultimately decided that restoration of the Lost Lake Wetland cannot be planned until a more thorough species inventory is conducted. Watch for us next spring in Whistler to follow through with



Devon Moore immersed in depth-testing.

the inventory recommendations put forward at this course.

Check our website for the dates of the 2010 Wetlandkeepers Course in Whistler and for other upcoming courses offered by BCWF: <http://www.bcwf.bc.ca/programs/wetlands/>.

BCIT's New Rivers Institute

by Tasleem Bhanjee

A leading gift of \$1 million from Rudy North, president and founder of North Growth Management Ltd. and environmental philanthropist, has established the Rivers Institute at the British Columbia Institute of Technology (BCIT) – the first entity of its kind in BC.

The Rivers Institute will build on the BCIT vision of being integral to the economic, social and environmental prosperity of the province. It will unite the public in an effort to protect the world's rivers, increase public awareness about the importance of our waterways, conduct state-of-the-art river-related research, and provide financial support to students.

"BC's natural heritage is arguably one of the greatest of any economically developed region in the world," said North. "I am confident that this initiative at BCIT will become a driving force for keeping BC a natural wonder of the developed world."

As of April, Order of Canada recipient Mark Angelo leads the Institute as the Rudy North Chair in River Ecology, the first such position in Canada. As program head of the BCIT Fish, Wildlife and Recreation (FWR) program, Angelo brought attention to the critical importance of healthy waterways, and founded both BC and World Rivers Day.

"BCIT is most fortunate to receive this timely and important contribution from North, who has been a strong supporter of the FWR program for many years," said Laurie Clarke, BCIT's vice president, Development. "The creation of the Rivers Institute will ensure that both now and in the future BCIT plays a guiding role in river-related research, raising public awareness, and developing sustainable, best-practice management of the waterways of the province, and in fact, the world."

Dear River Advocates,

A recent TV news clip focused on the incredible restoration of Still Creek in Burnaby. While the upper part of this stream within Vancouver proper was culverted and paved over like so many urban waterways around the world, the lower part of Still Creek, where it runs through the City of Burnaby, has remained open thanks to the city's long-standing open watercourse policy.

And while the creek was once the most polluted stream in the province, this waterway has come back a long way thanks to the ongoing efforts of groups like the Rivers Institute at BCIT, chaired by Mark Angelo, as well as the Institute's acclaimed Fish and Wildlife program.

Watch the Still Creek story on YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V67Fq8dYqeo>

P.S. – There are new Twitter and Facebook links where you can stay in touch with river issues in BC and around the world. To twitter, go to www.twitter.com/Rivers_BCIT

Join the RiverWorld Facebook page at <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Burnaby-BC/RiverWorld/22851791586>.

~ Kelly Pearce



Sustaining the Spirit: Workshop 2009

by Amanda Balcke
and Abigail Cruickshank

The Salmon Enhancement Program Community Workshop came to Maple Ridge in May, hosted by Alouette River Management Society (ARMS), Kanaka Education & Environmental Partnership Society (KEEPS) and Stave Valley Salmonid Enhancement Society. Over 200 volunteers from across the province came together to share experiences and build friendships.



Everyone was invited to help paint cement salmon with designs from the Stream of Dreams. The sculptures will be placed in Maple Ridge in the coming year.

The workshop was kickstarted on Friday evening by a First Nations blessing and a wine and cheese meet and greet. Saturday's choice of workshop sessions included watershed assessment, fish ecology, Geographic Information Systems, invasive plants, climate change, aquatic insects and more. Around the campfire that night, among the tall trees of Allco Park, Matt Foy brought to life the story of the Alouette sockeye. After being land-locked for almost 80 years behind a dam, they have returned to the Alouette watershed.

On Sunday, participants had their choice of four fieldtrips highlighting aspects of Maple Ridge and Mission's natural heritage. Many chose to paddle down the Fraser River in voyageur canoes with the Rivershed Society of BC while

guides explained issues affecting the Fraser and its riversheds.

Meanwhile, ARMS hosted a tour of the Rivers Heritage Centre, including the hatchery, enhancement projects, stream diversions and beaver control for coho rehabilitation. During lunch beside Alouette Lake the guests learned how lake fertilization has increased the fish population.

KEEPS hosted a canyon trail hike which included scenic Cliff Falls. Park interpreters gave tips on hiking safely and the physical, mental and spiritual benefits of walks in nature.

The Silverdale Creek wetlands tour examined a habitat that has been highly impacted by industry and has been a challenge for the Stave Valley Salmonid Enhancement Society to restore to a more natural ecosystem.

Overall this was a great occasion for SEP volunteers to create partnerships, learn from other organizations, feature their successes and sustain their spirit to continue the great work of salmon enhancement.

Students step up

by Ross Davies

Kanaka Education and Environmental Partnership Society (KEEPS) is a stewardship group located in Maple Ridge. One of our primary activities is conducting environmental education programs.

In 2006, two KEEPS program interpreters walked into Samuel Robertson Technical School (SRT). Their mood was sombre. They had just been across the road at Spencer Creek in Albion Park, where silt from upstream construction was choking the life from this small but important watercourse. They shared the news with the Science 8 class, and suddenly everything changed!

The students embarked on a water sampling program, measuring temperature, pH and turbidity. Their results were made public, generating community and media attention and a multi-agency Sediment Control Workshop in March 2007.

Since then, the students have taken on additional projects such as invasive plant removal and re-planting of native species. Albion Park has come alive with the laughter of youth making a difference in their community, while the water quality in Spencer Creek has steadily improved.

In Spring 2009, SRT nominated our group for a B.C Hydro Community Champion award, and this nomination was successful. However, to us this is



Teacher James White and his water-sampler team.

a team award that we share with the students and staff of SRT. And to those students, we have a message: you have shown your community that there is no more powerful and effective agent of change than the infectious enthusiasm of youth.





Salmon and Nutrients: A seminar on science and policy — Proceedings

Every year, spawning Pacific salmon deliver large quantities of nutrients to freshwater and riparian ecosystems. Current research has shown that the influence of these nutrient subsidies on ecosystems is variable, making it difficult to quantify the value of salmon nutrients to their ecosystems. One of the objectives of the Fisheries and Oceans Canada Wild Salmon Policy is to include ecosystem values, such as marine-derived salmon nutrient subsidies, in the management of Pacific salmon. However, DFO recognizes the challenges in translating ecosystem values in management initiatives. This seminar and dialogue examined the current research on salmon nutrient contributions to ecosystems with a focus on using this information to advance the implementation of *Strategy 3: Inclusion of Ecosystem Values and Monitoring of the Wild Salmon Policy*. Download the document at <http://www.sfu.ca/cstudies/science/>.

Common Diseases of Wild and Cultured Fishes in Alaska

by Theodore Richard Meyers. Published by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Fish Pathology Laboratories, 333 Raspberry Road, Anchorage, Alaska 99518

Christine MacWilliams, veterinarian for DFO Pacific Region, recommends this book. "It's a really good, quick, concise reference with nice pictures; a great addition to any northwest fish culturist's bookshelf."

Nature-Friendly Land Use Practices at Multiple Scales

by Rebecca Kihlslinger and James McElfish. Published by the Environmental Law Institute.

Land development decisions present significant threats to wildlife and ecological systems. But there is often a mismatch between the scale at which land development decisions are made and the scale at which conservation must be addressed in order to succeed.

This book presents eight case studies of developers, local governments and public agencies that have worked across jurisdictional and ecological boundaries to address habitat conservation. From these, it draws six best practices for design and implementation of programs and projects that incorporate effective long-term conservation at multiple scales.

Order online at http://www.islandpress.org/bookstore/details.php?prod_id=1079 or at Amazon.com.

Western water in the 21st century: policies and programs that stretch supplies in a prior appropriation world

by Adam Schempp. Published by the Environmental Law Institute.

This handbook discusses Western United States water law. However, many of the ideas and issues described are applicable to us in BC. We not only face cross-border water-use conflicts, but also are finding our own laws and practices in need of adaptation to meet the challenge of increasing demand and outdated water allocation methods. The ideas are presented with clarity and logic.

Download the document at http://www.elistore.org/reports_detail.asp?ID=11349.

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