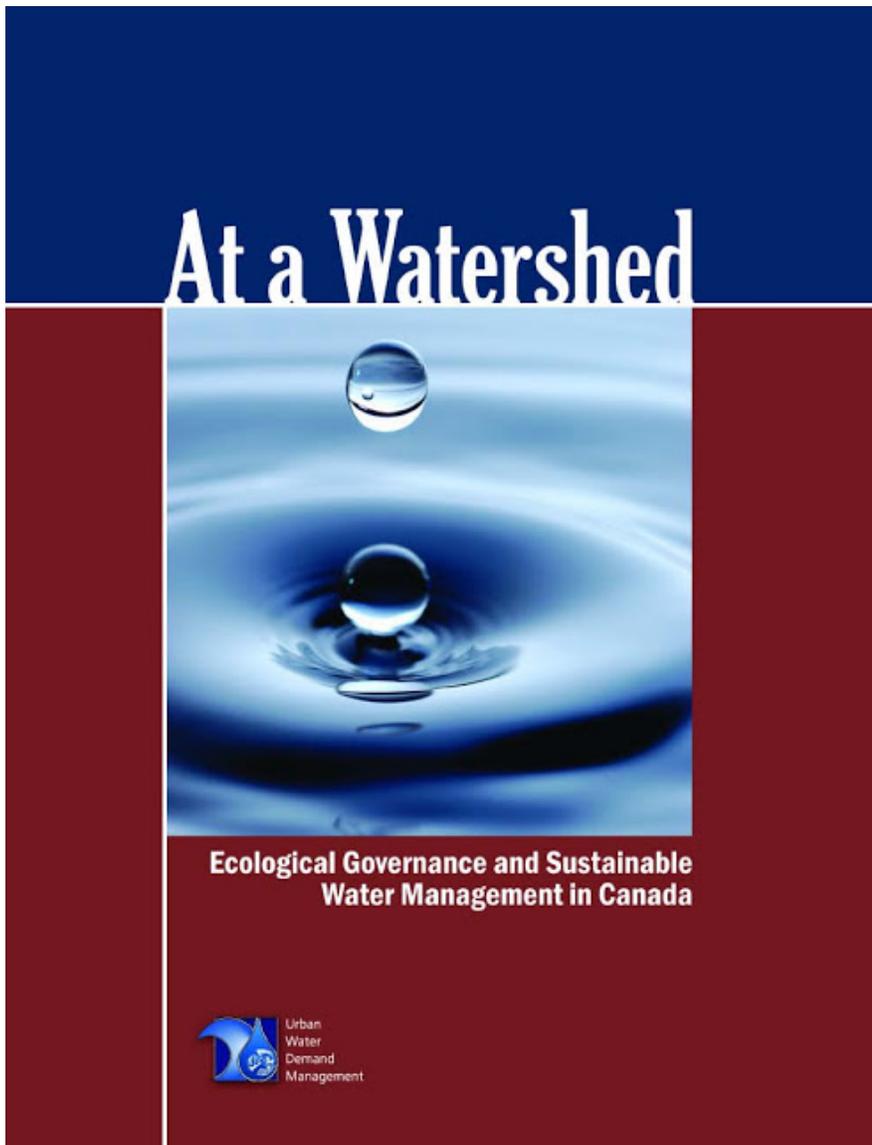


Partnership for Water Sustainability in BC

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2012

Learning to Think Like a Watershed



Collaboration is a Necessity

Imagine engaging all interests and governments in an effective collaborative process that successfully responds to the challenges and opportunities of watershed governance. In January 2012, this was the primary purpose for gathering key players working on and interested in collaborative watershed governance in British Columbia. The title of the 2-day event was:

- **A Water Gathering: Collaborative Watershed Governance in BC and Beyond**

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ABOUT THE PARTNERSHIP

Partnership for Water Sustainability

British Columbia, Canada

Incorporated in November 2010, the Partnership is an autonomous non-profit society. The Partnership had its genesis in the Water Sustainability Committee of the BC Water and Waste Association. The Partnership is helping the Province implement the Living Water Smart and Green Communities initiatives. We are doing that through shared responsibility in delivering the Water Sustainability Action Plan. Because the Partnership is the hub for a 'convening for action' network in the local government setting, we are positioned to facilitate alignment of regional and local actions with provincial goals. We primarily work in the local government context, with a focus on community

Hosted in Vancouver by the Pacific Business & Law Institute, this gathering was a shared exploration of how to build and maintain successful collaborative processes to govern watersheds. According to Oliver Brandes, a program organizer, the goal was to share participants' collective experiences and, in workshops, engage those with widely-recognized expertise in addressing practical challenges.

"Dialogue is always a precursor to action in a healthy democracy. The challenge is to include a broader cast of characters so that more than just the "usual" suspects are involved in decisions. This forum was designed with the belief that collaborative solutions are within reach, calling on successful stories of change," states Oliver Brandes, Senior Research Associate and Co-Director of the POLIS Project at the University of Victoria.



"Everyone in B.C. agrees that we want to keep our lakes and rivers clean and flowing, and that we have to share it between different uses and different kinds of users: for the environment, for washing and drinking, for farms and for fish, for economic opportunities and, most fundamentally, to ensure ecological function. It seems sensible to sort through competing interests and potential conflicts by getting those interests — and those affected — to talk together."

TO LEARN MORE: To read an op-ed article about the gathering, and published by the Vancouver Sun, click on [Learning to Think Like a Watershed](#). The article was co-authored by Oliver Brandes, David Marshall (founding Executive Director of the Fraser Basin Council), and Anna Warwick Sears (Executive Director of the Okanagan Basin Water Board).

Oliver Brandes was the principal author of **At a Watershed: Ecological Governance and Sustainable Water Management in Canada**, published in 2005. To download a copy, [click here](#).

Posted by [Partnership for Water Sustainability](#) at 3:28 PM



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and regional planning systems, to influence uptake of strategies that will integrate decisions about use and conservation of land with water sustainability outcomes. The guiding philosophy is "design with nature". E-BLASTS: The Partnership distributes stories to the "convening for action" network via email. E-blasts are posted here and are complete with links to supporting stories on the Water Bucket.

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