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**Thursday, June 25**  
(Following the 2015 Canadian Water Summit)

**Cocktail reception:**  
5:30 – 7:00 p.m.

**Dinner:**  
7:00 – 9:00 p.m.

**Venue:**  
Westin Bayshore Hotel  
Vancouver, BC

To participate or register for tickets, contact Lee Scarlett at  
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## BLOG

### Interview: Steve Litke of the Fraser Basin Council

Posted on May 25, 2015

*The May 26 POLIS Creating a Blue Dialogue webinar will focus on Sustainable Financing for Watershed Governance. Prior to the webinar, Water Canada reached out to Steve Litke, senior manager of the Fraser Basin Council's watersheds and water resources program, to talk about alternative water and watershed governance arrangements and sustainable, long-term funding.*

#### Water Canada: What is the Fraser Basin Council, and what are its main goals?

Steve Litke: The Fraser Basin Council (FBC) is a nongovernmental, not for profit organization that is working to advance sustainability throughout B.C. with a focus in the Fraser River basin. The mandate of the council is to ensure that the Fraser basin is a place where social well-being is supported by a vibrant economy and sustained by a healthy environment. The council's board of directors includes the four orders of government (federal, provincial, local, First Nations), the private sector, and civil society. In FBC's five-year strategic plan, there are four priorities or goals:

1. Taking action on climate change and air quality;
2. Supporting healthy watersheds and water resources;
3. Building sustainable and resilient communities and regions; and
4. Increasing organizational strength and resilience.

#### WC: Can you give us a quick overview of some of the research conducted by the Fraser Basin Council and how it affects alternative water and watershed governance arrangements?

SL: We have undertaken research on several topics relevant to watershed planning and governance. This research usually involves a combination of reviewing academic and professional literature as well as learning from practitioners and advisors. We prepared a guide (<http://www.rethinkingwater.ca>) to water-related planning processes in B.C. to assist communities and organizations in undertaking water or watershed planning.

#### WC: How does the Fraser Basin Council's research affect B.C. directly, and what insight and value does it offer to the rest of the country?

SL: The intent of the research is to document and share good practices and lessons learned. Most of our research focuses on issues of importance to B.C. and is based on real examples of initiatives and organizations within B.C., but in some cases, we do look to learn from other jurisdictions. Our research on planning and governance is particularly relevant in B.C. because of the potential of the new *Water Sustainability Act* to enable alternative governance arrangements. We want to help strengthen the state of readiness in communities to take on new roles and responsibilities in water and watershed management. Regardless of the legislative context, there are many good practices and lessons learned that are more generally relevant, both in B.C. and in other parts of the country. This includes experiences and lessons learned with respect to collaboration, multi-interest processes, the importance of trust and strong working relations, conflict resolution, and other structural, procedural, and human considerations.

#### WC: How is the new *Water Sustainability Act* going to affect your work with the Fraser Basin Council? What are some challenges it will present, and where will it make life easier?

SL: Much of the Act is dependent on the development and implementation of regulations, which are not yet in place so it is too early to know how the Act will affect our work in the council. Several elements of the Act have great potential to improve the sustainability of water resources, which is a goal of the council. Examples include environmental flows, water objectives, groundwater regulation, water sustainability plans, and alternative governance arrangements. Increased measuring, monitoring, and reporting requirements within the *Water Sustainability Act* should improve the quality and quantity of data that is available to inform and improve planning and decision-making. Each of these parts of the Act can advance sustainability and the Fraser Basin Council is available to serve in different capacities to assist. For example, if alternative governance arrangements are enabled, our research to date can help inform those arrangements and strengthen capacity. A common role for FBC is to serve as an impartial facilitator. If *Water Sustainability Plans* and/or alternative governance arrangements are going to be pursued, there could be important support roles for the Fraser Basin Council to provide.

#### WC: What actions can the Fraser Basin Council and similar organizations, either in B.C. or elsewhere in Canada, take to secure sustainable, long-term funding?

SL: So far, there are no silver bullets that we can see. Each watershed and watershed organization is unique. It is about being creative, innovative, and compelling. It may come down to education or crisis rather than some clever policy or financial tool. For example, if the public, stakeholders—including the private sector—and all orders of government recognize the importance of water, watershed health, and community sustainability, it should be simple to secure the funds necessary to achieve this. This type of understanding can be achieved through education and it can also be driven by crisis. If a relatively minor water problem worsens to a state of crisis, the priority importance of water is elevated and actions and investments are more likely to be taken. We might need to better articulate the benefits of good management and the costs and conflicts associated with mismanagement. There probably also needs to be a clear link between the source of the revenue – such as landowners or water users – and the benefits derived from investing those revenues back into water and watershed management. Once a foundation of support exists, government agencies, communities, and businesses can then draw from those sources of funding that are best suited to support sustainable funding over the long term.

For information on the POLIS *Water Sustainability Project* and all upcoming *Creating a Blue Dialogue* webinars, please visit <http://poliswaterproject.org/>



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## EVENTS

- May 25-29, 2015: 58th Annual Conference & Trade Show Great Lakes Research
- May 26, 2015: POLIS Webinar: Sustainable Financing for Watershed Governance
- May 26, 2015: OCSI Infrastructure Forum: Courageous Conversations
- May 27, 2015: Toronto WaterCity 2040 F Up
- May 27, 2015: Lake Ontario Evening - B Edition
- May 27-30, 2015: 43rd BCWWA Annual Conference & Trade Show
- May 28, 2015: Munk School Symposium: Underground: Financing Groundwater Monitoring in Canada
- May 29-31, 2015: AquaHacking 2015 - C River Summit
- June 3-4, 2015: Stream Restoration Workshop
- June 5-6, 2015: OGWA Convention and Tournament