

## Cowichan Valley Regional District Establishes New Drinking Water and Watershed Protection Service

### WHAT

As an innovative and leading example of local water protection, the Cowichan Valley Regional District (CVRD) has secured sustainable funding through taxation to establish a Drinking Water and Watershed Protection Service to support regional programs related to drinking water and watershed protection. This service will:

- Increase the level of knowledge about drinking water sources to support the long-term sustainability of water resources.
- Support better collaboration among various water providers, users, and stewards.
- Develop watershed management plans that will characterize risks to water supply and water quality.
- Provide information for land-use planning and determining urban growth, as well as information on infrastructure and water utility needs across the region.
- Prioritize actions to address risks, such as flood protection, drought response, improving water conservation and stewardship, or emergency water supply plans.
- Provide ongoing, sustainable support for critical management and partnership groups, such as the Cowichan Watershed Board and local stewardship organizations.

### WHY

Drinking water and watershed management are consistently identified as priority issues in the region—similar to many communities across British Columbia and Canada. In the Cowichan, increasing water use and a changing climate impact watershed health. Water quality and quantity challenges exist across the region's 16 watersheds, with numerous water users operating independently and in an uncoordinated way. Establishing support for better collaboration among these various water users and purveyors, as well as improved cooperation among decision-makers, will catalyze a more comprehensive and integrated approach to watershed health. The service makes new and enhanced forms of collaboration possible, and allows for better sharing of resources, data, and support for freshwater sustainability.

### WHEN

**October 20, 2018:** A referendum for electorate support for the service passed with **65% approval** (12,890 to 6,667).

**November 14, 2018:** CVRD Bylaw No. 4202 – Drinking Water and Watershed Protection Service Establishment Bylaw was officially adopted by the CVRD.

### HOW

- The Drinking Water and Watershed Protection Service Establishment Bylaw allows the CVRD to requisition up to the greater of **\$750,000 or \$0.045 per \$1000 of taxable value** within the service area.
- The annual budgets will be established by the CVRD Board based on the annual work plans and long-term strategy.

### LEARN MORE

CVRD Environmental Services Division website  
[cprd.bc.ca/1691/Environment](http://cprd.bc.ca/1691/Environment)

Pathways and Partnerships: A Framework for Collaboration and Reconciliation in the Cowichan Watershed (Jan 2019)  
[poliswaterproject.org/polis-research-publication/pathways-partnerships](http://poliswaterproject.org/polis-research-publication/pathways-partnerships)

For more information on the establishment of this service or details on other examples contact:

- Zita Botelho, Sustainable Funding for Watershed Governance Initiative, [zita.m.botelho@gmail.com](mailto:zita.m.botelho@gmail.com)
- Laura Brandes, POLIS Water Sustainability Project, [communications@polisproject.org](mailto:communications@polisproject.org)

"This type of service represents a growing trend towards freshwater protection at the local level, with similar initiatives underway in other regions of British Columbia, including the Columbia Shuswap Regional District, Islands Trust, Kootenay Boundary Regional District, Regional District of Nanaimo, and the Thompson-Nicola Regional District.



POLIS Project on Ecological Governance  
**watersustainabilityproject**



**University  
of Victoria**

Centre for  
Global Studies





University  
of Victoria

Centre for  
Global Studies

## Centre for Global Studies

[uvic.ca/research/centres/globalstudies](http://uvic.ca/research/centres/globalstudies)

The Centre for Global Studies (CFGS), founded in 1998, fosters research, reflection, and action on complex issues of local, national, and global importance. Located at the University of Victoria, CFGS is a collaborative community of scholars and leaders that is uniquely positioned to bridge academic research and student mentoring with innovative knowledge mobilization and effective community engagement. CFGS research considers the nexus of the local and global - how local concerns have global effects and how global issues manifest at the local level.



POLIS Project on Ecological Governance

**watersustainabilityproject**

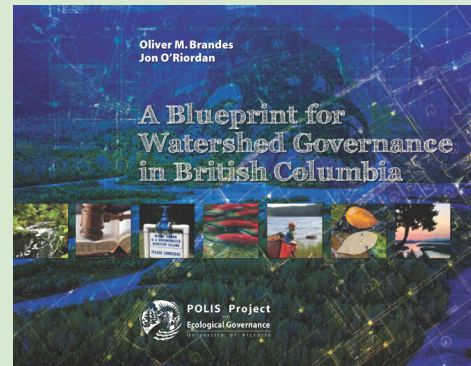
## POLIS Water Sustainability Project

[poliswaterproject.org](http://poliswaterproject.org)

The POLIS Water Sustainability Project (WSP) is an action-based research group that recognizes water scarcity is a social dilemma that cannot be addressed by technical solutions alone. The project focuses on four themes crucial to a sustainable water future:

- Water Conservation and the Water Soft Path
- The Water-Energy Nexus
- Watershed Governance
- Water Law and Policy.

The WSP works with industry, government, civil society, environmental not-for-profits, and individuals to develop and embed water conservation strategies that benefit the economy, communities, and the environment. The WSP is an initiative of the POLIS Project on Ecological Governance at the Centre for Global Studies, University of Victoria.



## A Blueprint for Watershed Governance in British Columbia (Jan 2014)

[poliswaterproject.org/polis-research-publication/blueprint-watershed-governance-british-columbia/](http://poliswaterproject.org/polis-research-publication/blueprint-watershed-governance-british-columbia/)

This report focuses on current water governance issues in British Columbia and offers a path forward for how the Province could transform its current approaches to decision-making to ensure a more sustainable and resilient future. It sets out a strategic 10-year program and proposes nine winning conditions to ensure success.

Drawing in part on conclusions from *A Blueprint for Watershed Governance in British Columbia*, the complementary *Decision-Makers' Brief: A Blueprint for Watershed Governance in B.C.* (Aug 2014) offers what is arguably *the* strategic path forward to ensure British Columbia's *Water Sustainability Act* is implemented to its fullest potential. Available at [poliswaterproject.org/polis-research-publication/decision-makers-brief-blueprint-watershed-governance-b-c](http://poliswaterproject.org/polis-research-publication/decision-makers-brief-blueprint-watershed-governance-b-c)