

**AN ASSESSMENT OF BARRIERS  
AND  
PROPOSED ACTIONS TO ADVANCE  
WATERSHED MANAGEMENT  
IN  
BRITISH COLUMBIA**

**A Report on Community Workshops**

**By**

**T. E. Romaine and M.J. Romaine**

**British Columbia Watershed  
Stewardship Alliance**



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## **I. Introduction**

In many watershed planning situations, it is difficult for those with an interest in managing the watershed -- agencies, planners, landowners, and the public -- to make sense of complex and uncertain "facts" and to use this information to shape a management plan that reflects and can be adopted by all interests. Universal acceptance and commitment to plans and management strategies within a watershed requires a common framework of understanding. Such a framework requires a long-term vision to maintain the health of the watershed; reflect the needs of the whole community; and be supported by complementary agency policies and programs.

Collaboration between communities and governments in Watershed Management Planning is an essential step to address problems and pressures facing watersheds and communities throughout BC. Processes that provide for public involvement at all levels - provincial, regional and local is required if to develop and implement watershed management plans which protect ecological functions and processes and reflect the needs and aspirations of local communities.

## **II. Background**

The BC Watershed Stewardship Alliance (BCWSA) incorporated under the Society Act in May 1997.

### **Functions**

- ◆ Support existing Watershed groups while encouraging the formation of others through providing advice, knowledge and experience and offering when feasible and appropriate to actively participate and facilitate in the development of such groups
- ◆ Be an advocate for Community leadership, open i.e. inclusive -consensus based decision making and an ecosystem approach to Watershed Stewardship and management.
- ◆ Be proactive in offering to provide liaison/coordination between groups and/or potential partners.
- ◆ Promote a common set of watershed management principles at the Provincial, Regional and local levels
- ◆ Enable inter-group-interagency information exchange, cooperation and education.
- ◆ Support individual watershed initiative efforts to obtain resources (e.g. core funding), recognition and acceptance as an important voice in their respective areas.
- ◆ To monitor current and emerging watershed management issues and to seek solutions for addressing common watershed management problems in BC.

### **Responsibilities**

- ◆ Be knowledgeable of local groups, issues, research, planning and restoration needs
- ◆ Promote understanding and education of watershed management principles and governmental programs and plans
- ◆ Foster inclusive community partnerships and provide leadership in shared decision making
- ◆ Encourage and facilitate improved communication, coordination and cooperation between potential partners
- ◆ Foster innovation and local solutions to watershed problems
- ◆ Seek collaborative arrangements with groups, organizations and agencies operating on an interregional or provincial wide basis

### **Objectives**

- ◆ Enhance communications between groups (government, environmental and community)
- ◆ Provide information on watershed functions as well as current status, issues, vision, skills and needs of watershed and other stewardship groups
- ◆ Act as a neutral "translator" between government and community groups in order to move from "positions" to looking at collaboration through partnerships
- ◆ Enable improved participation of stewardship groups in current planning initiatives such as LRMPs, Growth Management Strategies, Georgia Basin initiatives, local government planning and BC Fish Protection Act amendment implementation
- ◆ Determine interest and opportunities of training initiatives to partner and develop overall plan for education on watershed management and stewardship
- ◆ Assist partners i.e. support groups carrying out planning enhancement projects, helping groups to become established
- ◆ Promote successful demonstration projects and partnership arrangements
- ◆ Develop a database on the above and make it available on the internet

## **III. The BCWSA Program**

### **Background**

In 1998 BCWSA developed a discussion paper on "Implementing a Collaborative Approach to Watershed Planning & Stewardship in British Columbia". The underlying premise being that healthy communities and economies, depend on maintaining and restoring the provinces' ecosystems. Successfully balancing resources uses and stakeholder interests while mitigating impacts to sustainability - (environmental, economic, and social) requires a collaborative approach. This is required in order to maintain momentum and to build synergy of the groundswell of stewardship activities throughout BC. It is also necessary to avoid duplication of efforts; frustration amongst agencies and groups competing for the same few resources; and to ensure that a holistic approach is the end result of individual and combined efforts. The magnitude of effort

necessary to accomplish the task of restoring and maintaining our watershed requires the combined and co-ordinated energy of individuals, communities and organizations. Collaboration is essential at all levels (local, regional, and provincial) A framework that builds on current successes; provides for consistency while offering necessary flexibility at the local level is required. The above document has been the basis for the BCWSA Program.

### **The 1998-1999 BCWSA Program:**

#### **◆ Outreach, Survey and Analysis of Watershed Needs**

An analysis was completed for 23 watershed groups located throughout British Columbia. Findings indicate a wide variety of concerns: loss of habitat; declining fisheries; lack of riparian vegetation; increased erosion and deposition; water shortages; and impaired water quality. Key barriers were identified by watershed groups with respect to watershed management, community based planning, capacity building and structural/organizational needs.

#### **◆ Creation and Maintenance of Information System**

Information from the above surveys were used to develop a web site, a BCWSA regional newsletter and a resource directory.

#### **◆ Foster Education and Awareness on Watershed Management**

The BCWSA developed presentations on Watershed Management for delivery at various public meetings, forums and workshops.

#### **◆ Planning and Management**

The BCWSA developed a strategic plan. "Towards Sustainable Communities in British Columbia" for implementing collaboration between partnerships and has circulated it to BCWSA member watershed community groups and to agencies for review and comment. This document served as the basis for seeking support funding.

### **The 1999-2000 BCWSA Program**

On the basis of the above an education and outreach program was developed by BCWSA to address barriers previously identified by community groups. Funding was sought and received to enable BCWSA to undertake work on a province-wide basis and workshops were conducted throughout the province.

## **IV. The BCWSA Workshops**

### **Purpose and Objectives**

The main objective of these workshops was to address identified community barriers through enhancing the understanding of watershed management planning, strengthen community based planning, building community and individual capacity and fostering organizational structures to facilitate improved local and regional collaboration and cooperation. This was accomplished through education sessions and workshops tailored to address local needs.

A second set of objectives was to connect with local groups across the province; to raise awareness of the importance of communities being involved and promoting watershed management; and to aid government agencies, and other NGO's with a better understanding of communities needs throughout the province.

### **Methodology**

The working program began by compiling a list of commonly identified barriers and challenges to advance watershed management understanding, community based management, building capacity and improving cooperation and collaboration both within communities and between various interests. (See list in following Table 1) Education components were developed to aid a better understanding the basis behind these barriers and strategies for overcoming them.

Community groups throughout BC were contacted and in collaboration with local community leaders, agendas developed for one-day workshops to address both local needs and issues. The workshops were open to the whole community (non-government organizations, agencies, industry, individuals and First Nations). A generic approach included presentations by local representatives on local assets and initiatives and educational sessions on watershed management, community based planning, capacity building and organizational and structural requirements provided by BCWSA. This was followed with working sessions to address barriers and identify solutions/actions. All results were recorded and later provided to each community.

## SUMMARY

This report incorporates the most frequently identified barriers and suggested solutions raised in community workshops. Future steps require turning the ideas and suggestions of individual groups into action at both the local, regional and provincial levels.

BCWSA is hoping that these workshops strengthen greater public awareness that sustainable communities require a holistic and integrated approach to resource management, economic development and social health and that this is a collaborative responsibility. Insight into key barriers and their solutions is the start to building a common understanding between previously isolated and frequently polarised groups and government agencies. This hopefully will lead to joint co-operation between all in planning, management, and governance of our watershed.

### **Table 1 - Topics and Specific Barriers**



| <b>Topic Area</b>                             | <b>Specific Barriers</b>  |
|---|---|
| <b>Watershed Management</b>                   |   |
|   | 1. Limited Community Awareness of Fundamental ecosystem/watershed principles  |
|   | 2. Economic forces drive the political engine; protection of ecological systems is not given the same priority as the protection of economic and social systems |
|   | 3. Different interests and needs are reflected throughout and adjacent to the proposed watershed  |
|   | 4. Link between the community and the environment is not acknowledged or appreciated  |
| <b>Community Based Planning</b>               |   |
|   | 1. Weakness in or absence of a community-based planning process   |
|   | 2. External influences such as land use plans, "outside driven" agendas/development   |
|   | 3. Limited support/staff resources of government  |
|   | 4. Previous negative experiences with planning or public participation process  |
| <b>Capacity Building</b>                      |   |
|   | 1. Limited number of committed people, volunteer time, financial and other resources  |
|   | 2. Apathy as a result of such factors as lack of sense of community, defeat, anger, or burnout  |
|   | 3. Competition for influence, power, credit, and/or funding between community groups or within community groups   |
|   | 4. Limited ability/capacity of individuals and community groups to address local issues   |
| <b>Structural/Organizational Requirements</b> |   |
|   | 1. Balancing and respecting the interests, views, and enthusiasm of individuals with the overall needs of the community   |
|   | 2. Competing priorities - may be other government initiatives or issues in the community/watershed  |
|   | 3. Polarisation of community into different "camps"   |
|   | 4. Limited awareness/networking with other similar community/watershed organizations  |

## BCWSA Workshop

The following table 2 identifies workshops conducted.

**Table 2 - Location, Date, and Number of Attendees to BCWSA Workshops**

| <b>Group(s)</b>   | <b>Location</b> | <b>Date</b>        | <b># of Attendees</b> |
|---|-----------------|--------------------|-----------------------|
| Lower Mainland Streamkeepers  | Surrey          | June 12, 1999      | 48                    |
| Arrowsmith Watershed Coalition  | Qualicum Beach  | June 19, 1999      | 9                     |
| Cowichan Valley Watersheds  | Duncan          | July 10, 1999      | 60                    |
| South Thompson Watershed Planning Council   | Kamloops        | July 17, 1999      | 21                    |
| False Creek (C.R.E.E.K.S.)  | Vancouver       | August 6, 1999     | 43                    |
| Arrowsmith Watershed Coalition  | Qualicum Beach  | September 11, 1999 | 17                    |
| Shuswap-Thompson Community Watersheds   | Salmon Arm      | September 17, 1999 | 9                     |
| Lower Bridge Creek Watershed Committee  | 100 Mile House  | September 23, 1999 | 46                    |
| Yalakom Conservation Society  | Yalakom         | September 30, 1999 | 10                    |
| North Columbia Bio-Regional Conference  | Nelson          | October 9, 1999    | 8                     |
| Capital Area Region   | Victoria        | October 14, 1999   | 30                    |
| Sunshine Coast Conservation Society   | Sechelt         | October 16, 1999   | 33                    |
| San Jose Watershed Committee, Baker Creek Enhancement Society, Quesnel River Watershed Alliance | Williams Lake   | November 13, 1999  | 34                    |
| Vision 2000: Fisheries Conference   | Kamloops        | February 24, 2000  | 85                    |

## **V. Workshop results**

The following solutions to barriers were identified as steps towards sustainable resource use and conservation stewardship.

### ***Watershed Management***

The following barriers and suggested actions to implementing a holistic ecosystem approach to resource management and planning have been identified:

***Barrier 1: Limited Community Awareness of Fundamental ecosystem/watershed principles***

*Suggested Actions to Overcoming the Barrier:*

**1.) Demonstration projects and making them visible**

Demonstration projects in visible areas help educate the local community on various natural systems and attempts on restoration. The community has the opportunity to overlook and visualise the attempts made. It was felt that this type of work provides positive feedback from the community and encourages participation. These can be small prospects but they have value in showing that tangible concrete positive actions can be taken.

**2.) Press releases on the happenings in the watershed**

The second most popular action item suggested throughout workshops held across the province was that of press releases on the happenings in the watershed. This could be done through local newspapers, television, and or radio broadcasts. Access to information would encourage the community to learn about the ecosystems in their area/community.

**3.) Communication among residents about watershed and importance**

A community outreach in terms of door knocking and or holding community meetings to provide a mechanism to meet the public face to face and inform them about ecological issues and happenings within their watershed/community. This is simply another mechanism for raising awareness among the community's residents.

**4.) Public Education - fact sheets, brochures**

At public forums/outreaches, fact sheets and brochures on the watershed and or various ecological issues should be produced. They will provide opportunities for the public to become knowledgeable on ecosystem/watershed principles.

#### **5.) Arrange Tours of Awareness**

Providing tours of the area (i.e. walking, bus etc) for the local residents to provide feedback, discussions, and interpretations of various ecological sites within the community. Watershed community groups in the area should arrange these tours.

#### **6.) Education in schools - facilitate linkages between stewardship community & education system.**

It was also frequently mentioned that overcoming such a barrier of community awareness of fundamental ecosystem/watershed principles would be that of introducing such topics in local schools. This would provide a link between standard education and stewardship initiatives throughout their watershed. There are a number of examples throughout B.C. of good cooperation between school systems and watershed community groups. There are already a number of examples already in place that could be highlighted, perhaps via the website.

#### **7.) Regional Resource Directory**

The regional resource directory would provide an interchange of information between various community groups and organisations throughout the watershed. It will stimulate communication and networking between these groups on various ecological/watersheds issues. It will help minimise conflicts between various groups and will lead to better coordination and cooperation between groups interested in doing stewardship activities in their watershed. BCWSA now has a resource directory which includes 105 community groups across the province which can be activated via its website.

***Barrier 2: Economic forces drive the political engine; protection of ecological systems is not given the same priority as the protection of economic and social systems.***

#### *Suggested Actions to Overcoming Barrier:*

##### **1.) Quality of life indicators such as water quality will heighten perceived value of environment.**

The quality of water is a definite sign of ecological health in a watershed. Bad water quality via pollution or other harmful substances affects all life forms and their health in the watershed. Heightening awareness of water quality in a watershed will promote a value for the environment.

## **2.) Integrated planning and broad community participation**

A more comprehensive and holistic planning process will enable all concerns to be heard and incorporated. This will promote priority among all concerns raised, rather than just economical.

## **3.) Venue to present ideas, conduct cost-benefit analysis and establish priorities**

Public forums to discuss the merits of ecological integrity and social concerns is fundamental. It will help heighten their awareness and educate the public on the importance of such systems.

## **4.) Action plan to reach out and get groups to work together in order to facilitate broad community participation.**

An effective outreach program to enhance a higher level of participation and ensuing views. Regional organizations such as BCWSA, government, and First Nations should form a partnership to address such issues.

## **5.) Education, attitudes and getting information out**

The value of ecological systems would be fostered through an informative + educational system which would get this information out to the community at large. All too often, the media only provides an economic bent to society, thus shaping opinions in a fragmented manner. Information on ecological systems would help justify its protection and level the playing field with economic interests. Education can be provided by different regional environmental groups who can work with the media (radio, television) to distribute the information to the local community.

## **6.) Need cost accounting that includes the environmental and social systems and economy.**

In order to achieve equal priority as economic systems, environmental and social concerns need to be integrated into the cost-accounting decision. This balance of priorities will stimulate ecological protection, as well as reinforced social considerations. A more comprehensive, holistic governing approach will develop as a result of such inclusion of other factors. It would be helpful if interested organizations meet and share insights such as those developed by the David Suzuki Foundation in regards to alternative economics.

***Barrier 3: Different interests and needs are reflected throughout and adjacent to the proposed watershed. How can these interests and factors be accommodated?***

*Suggested Actions to Overcoming Barrier:*

**1.) More creative means of outreach - persistence, appeal to commonality**

There is apathy today among Canadian communities to get involved within their own communities'. Therefore outreach activities need to be creative to stimulate interest in the community to get them involved and cooperate on the relevant issues which affect all of them in the watershed. They are opportunities to use existing structures that have common interests and certain strategies. An example of this would be the BCEN (British Columbia Environmental Network) which has broad membership could collaborate with BCWSA and First Nations (tribal councils) to reach communities at the local level.

**2.) Education**

Another way to effectively accommodate different interests and needs throughout the watershed is via education. Providing facts and all represented views can help lead to a synthesis of information and cooperation on what needs to be given priority. An example of this could be a regional/local level review of assets - delivering of training at a local college.

**3.) Community watershed councils - solicit groups and assimilate needs**

There will be various interests and needs reflected throughout the watershed, the key is to synthesize as much as possible to avoid overlap. It would be the objective of the community watershed councils to have a set of needs that could reflect all groups, thus strengthening it and giving it a clear direction.

**4.) Healthy relationship, groups with regional district - integrated legislation and enforcement (Water Act strengthened)**

To accommodate a balanced and healthy relationship, community groups must work side by side with the regional district. This could be seen as in the form of legislation and enforcement, such as strengthening the Water Act. An idea for a community group would be to solicit First Nations support, perhaps in the form of an official letter

### **5.) Develop locally regional driven planning process - grassroots**

A regional driven planning process would more accurately reflect the true interests and need in the watershed. It would provide more interactions with neighbouring communities/watersheds. These organizations should be formally recognized and supported by governments

### **6.) Need to build relationship with other groups through understanding and sharing of information (take time to talk)**

***Barrier 4: Link between the community and the environment is not acknowledged or appreciated***

#### *Suggested Actions to Overcoming Barrier:*

#### **1.) Education - school programmes & public programmes**

There are real benefits and opportunities to link community programs with the local education programs in terms of outside education (i.e. field trips) that enhance awareness.

#### **2.) Put higher price on those not respecting environment**

Those who have a negative impact on the environment should pay a high price according to a more accurate ecological accounting system. This includes identifying local resource values, important ecological functions and or historical/cultural significance of resources.

#### **3.) Signage (streams, boundaries, interpretation)**

These types of work bring attention to environmental aspects not otherwise recognized.

#### **4.) Watershed walks - tours with local expertise**

This begins to build a crucial link between people and their surrounding environment.

#### **5.) Participation consensus-based planning processes (e.g. OCP Review)**

This process allows all values within a watershed to be identified and addressed.

## 6.) Stewardship Centre

A stewardship centre provides the opportunity for community members to meet to exchange ideas and to access information not exactly available elsewhere. It provides a general meeting place for the community.

## 7.) Watershed management plans - comprehensive environmental strategies

Plans that focus on environmental values and functions will provide opportunities for interrelated discussions and understanding.

## ***Community Based Planning***

Community Based Planning is a format of citizen participation and negotiation. Its main features are as follows:

- ◆ all interested groups involved in all substantive, high level deliberation and decision-making
- ◆ all parties involved as equals - not the individual committee members, but the groups themselves
- ◆ all allowed to set goals and agenda of deliberations, and to revise the same at any time
- ◆ all members/groups privy to same information and expert testimony
- ◆ all important deliberations public, open decisions taken by consensus

The barriers to implement such a process includes:

***Barrier 1: Weakness in or absence of a community-based planning Process***

*Suggested Actions to Overcoming Barrier:*

**1.) Demo projects representative of concerns-issues-problems and advertise**

Common study points of community based planning.

**2.) Outside facilitation or develop persons with these skills so consensus can be achieved**

Sometimes having community members facilitate community based planning processes can be detrimental. This is because they may try to influence the outcome because of the involvement of personal convictions. Generally an outside neutral facilitator will act arbitrary and try to establish consensus among all community members. On the other hand, some communities may feel



important to train their own members who actually do have a stake in the community and feel the need to help establish a effective community based planning process. It is important for success for a community to build its capacity to have a neutral facilitator. Governments and NGO's also could provide support and development of such facilitation programs. Also there could be an instructional website that could offer skills and techniques on the art of facilitation.

**3.) Issues must be defined and then pressure to be applied on agencies for cause derive form of commitment.**

Community groups should have a service in which their goals are made known to the community.

**4.) Solicit interests not already in process, and encourage discussion in the community and derive form of commitment**

**5.) Foster greater inclusively in the process**

There has to be deliberate effort to bring all interests to the table but in doing so the process for building understanding and consensus will be all-important.

**6.) Develop visual plan maps - use what people can see**

People can focus more effectively on the issues if they can see a visual interpretation of their watershed. Part of the problem sometimes is that a lack of visual material makes the subject matter somewhat distant and subjective. Community actively involved in developing visual interpretation of their watershed.

**7.) Develop linkages between different planning levels**

It is important to ensure that people that are involved in the various levels to make sure these linkages are there.

**8.) Be open less directed to encourage info-sharing access to information**

Allow access to information to be free flowing to allow it to be a non-biased process.

**9.) Develop & work on doable goals**

Working on feasible goals will strengthen the planning process and give it some realism. When people start seeing results, they will be more responsive to being involved in the community based planning process.

## 10.) Involve/engage participation

The strength, support and effectiveness of the community based planning process requires active participation from all.

***Barrier 2: External influences such as land use plans, "outside driven" agendas/development***

### *Suggested Actions to Overcoming Barrier:*

#### **1.) Community information provider to LRMP**

External processes can provide the opportunity for education of a broader community. Community/watershed groups should engage such processes. In a proactive manner

#### **2.) Outside influences meet community expectations - assess overall impact**

It is important for the community to have a common vision and set of goals against which to measure the impact of outside influences.

#### **3.) Long term vs. short-term goals - linked to action plan - develop healthy ecosystem goals**

Community based planning must have a strategy both long and short-term goals. Long term to set direction and short term to undertake action. Such an approach will allow communities to place outside initiatives into local content and react accordingly.

#### **4.) More binding OCP and Growth Management Strategy (urban)**

More partnerships between community groups and government agencies as to how reviews on these issues can be effectively accomplished is required.

#### **5.) Develop mechanism for assessing cumulative impacts - community watershed teams can do stream assessment**

Single developments do not address cumulative impacts. Community groups whom monitor change within a watershed can provide information that will hold new external developments accountable.

#### **6.) Power of persistence - saying 'NO' being firm**

Achieving the desired change in approaches and attitudes takes time and concerning groups need to be prepared to be persistent in making it happen.

***Barrier 3: Limited support/staff resources of Government***

*Suggested Actions to Overcoming Barrier:*

- 1.) More power to local government over environmental issues-educate public about how important government initiatives, programs are.**

Information should be distributed by government via community groups to the public at large to educate them about local environmental projects sponsored by government initiatives.

- 2.) Groups to be more knowledgeable about government mandates and clarification of roles of government agencies.**

This will be addressed in part II of the BCWSA Watershed Workbook.

- 3.) Co-operative plan with shared funding - delegation of task dollars to volunteer groups.**

Core funding should be provided to establish core groups and their function to undertake new roles and responsibilities handed down by government agencies.

- 4.) More co-operation between all levels of government**

Different planning models such as community based planning (visioning, goals, and objectives) for watersheds would incorporate ecological and local concerns and values. This intern would provide basis to meet closer objectives

***Barrier 4: Previous negative experiences with planning or Public participation process***

*Suggested Actions to Overcoming Barrier:*

- 1.) Agree to open public process - all opinions respected - process to resolve (democracy in action)**

A common roadmap of co-operation, unlike the Core process, should incorporate significant public input, such as the findings on Dunsmuir I, II, III conferences and BCWSA watershed workshops throughout the province.

**2.) Link agencies and develop like minded into politics - pressure politicians**

Change will require partnerships between all interests in society.

**3.) Learn from experiences and recognize past efforts/errors**

Recognize that the evolution of public participation in planning processes will only succeed by building on past experiences.

**4.) Common goals/long term**

***Capacity Building***

The intent is to enable communities to undertake planning and projects with minimal dependence on individual funding sources while still making progress towards watershed management planning and community development. This requires strategies that draw upon the energy of the community (not necessary financial). Capacity building comes in a number of forms such as improved understanding and a desire to co-operate and willingness to share ideas and to commit and providing effort in understanding projects and implementing change that is to the overall benefit of the community. The workshops addressed the strategies to build capacity using experiences of community initiatives throughout BC and elsewhere.

The barriers to implement such a process includes:

***Barrier 1: Limited number of committed people, volunteer time, financial and other resources***

*Suggested Actions to Overcoming Barrier:*

**1.) Emphasize and celebrate small successes**

One of the keys in getting the community active is through workshops or other events that promote the actions of community group(s) in a positive light.

**2.) Lots of committed people - create tasks to create pride**

**3.) Education centre - space for outdoor groups - one stop shopping resource centre - interpretative centre to provide leadership planning**

Concept of developing steward centres is a progressive step forward. It is important to involve communities as to how these centres are to be developed and placed around the province.

#### **4.) Market environment - touch nature - make it worth sustaining**

Need to have community groups and organizations define the broader values of ecosystems and have that made into accessible educational packages.

#### **5.) Involve more people; seniors and youth**

Seniors and student have a significant amount of insight that they could bring to the table and its important not to exclude these groups from the process. The community groups should use strategic marketing techniques to bring aboard these groups.

#### **6.) Involve local colleges & universities**

Education is a key component in successful watershed stewardship efforts. High school and grade school students and their teachers should be encouraged by community groups to get involved through the use of various watershed curricula, and local community colleges could be active in monitoring. Several sub-watershed stewardship groups would meet regularly for educational programs and to carry out monitoring and restoration activities, with the enthusiastic support of local government and non-government agencies.

***Barrier 2: Apathy as a result of such factors as lack of sense of community, defeat, anger or burnout***

#### *Suggested Actions to Overcoming Barrier:*

##### **1.) Grassroots driven - local interests - bridge between communities**

There is significant energy within communities and between communities. Recognizing the potential and common interests can re-energise both communities and individuals.

##### **2.) Create processes for community involvement - regionally organized, local neighbourhood input**

Resources, commitment to do it (valuable function) - > networking and meetings.

##### **3.) Get new people/ideas involved - create a vision**

Involving the entire community should be the objective when creating a vision for the community. The community groups should be responsible for creating a comprehensive outreach program.

#### **4.) Individual work & buddy system**

Don't be afraid to contribute your own efforts.

#### **5.) Humanising our projects (human scale/identification)**

Allowing the locals to work on local projects and tie them into the broader regional perspective.

#### **6.) Creating win/win situations**

Achieving success and goodwill will encourage greater recognition and sets a positive example to others that there is benefit to becoming involved and making the necessary commitment.

#### **7.) Festivities/celebrations**

Community groups with the help of some government funding should put on annual celebrations in honour of past achievements of events. Provides the opportunity to focus on the positive aspects of cooperation, a sense of contribution and overall pride in working as a community.

#### **8.) Fresh energy/fresh faces**

It is important to deliberately bring in new participants and not to be afraid that this will also introduce change. In other words, the goal should be to advance the overall agenda rather than to control it.

***Barrier 3: Competition for influence, power, credit, and/or funding between community groups or within community groups.***

#### *Suggested Actions to Overcoming Barrier:*

##### **1.) Consensus-based decision-making within an umbrella - long term effective organization not based on influence or power**

This provides the opportunity for all to contribute to see the value of working towards common goals.

##### **2.) Develop and establish common and clear vision - and caucusing like-minded organizations**

Establish a common vision in order to facilitate action ideas such as projects and activities.

**3.) Sharing of information between groups - communication and airing of differences in private not public**

Recognize that mutual understanding and dialogue will lead to building a sense of trust and approaches for tackling the concerns and interests of both individuals and communities.

**4.) Pull regional environmental groups together with neutral facilitator - unite creative minds and find common ground**

***Barrier 4: Limited ability/capacity of individuals and community groups to address local issues***

*Suggested Actions to Overcoming Barrier:*

**1.) Networking amongst organizations**

Today issues are often complex and require the knowledge, skills, and contact of many individuals.

**2.) Focus/Scope efforts**

Start on a doable project for which there is a high probability of success rather than failure.

**3.) Communicate out needs**

Ensure that the community is aware of the requirement for broader support.

**4.) Empower and respect people**

Be deliberate in the building of a "healthy community".

**4.) Teach Youth**

Provide better stewardship tools in the K-12 school system so that youths can address the issues and concerns of their respective communities'. Also it would be more efficient to share existing tools more effectively through getting community stewardship groups to help teach in the schools.

## **Structural/Organizational Requirements**

In order to maximize the interests and abilities of all partners, organizational structures are required to enable flexibility and sharing of activities amongst all partners. This is a welcome departure from the hierarchical approaches used by the government and corporate bodies.

The barriers to implement such a process includes:

***Barrier 1: Balancing and respecting the interests, views, and Enthusiasm of individuals with the overall needs of the Community***

### *Suggested Actions to Overcoming Barrier:*

#### **1.) Equitable representation and ensuring participation of all groups (developing partnerships)**

In order to enhance democracy at the community level, representation of all groups is necessary. Leaving groups out of the decision-making process allows for the community to act in ways that does not reflect its true aspirations. Their needs to be some recognition in the form of training in community based planning.

#### **2.) Make community needs priority over individual and notifying community at large - about decisions and allowing feedback (collaborative approach). Main objective should be protecting the environment.**

Democracy is the only method to effectively represent the overall needs of the community. All decisions must be made with the overall consent of the community. Allowing constant feedback throughout the process ensures that democracy allows all in the community the option to voice their concerns. The overall objective of the community should be the protection of the environment.

#### **3.) Identify watershed issues and determine what is feasible and what is not**

To balance the needs of the community it is important to determine is what is doable and what is not. Many of the aspirations of members of the community may be in the interest in the community but are more utopian than feasible. Community groups should be responsible for making their vision and goals available, perhaps through a website such as BCWSA's. This website would allow users to be aware of groups within their watershed as well as analyse common issues and concerns throughout the province.



#### **4.) Agreed system of communication and respectful interaction**

Common ground rules should be established and agreed upon by the community that allows for a fair and equal interaction among all stakeholders in the process. Principles to be adopted by each community group and need to be developed in a local context.

***Barrier 2: Competing priorities - may be other government initiatives or issues in the community/watershed***

#### *Suggested Actions to Overcoming Barrier:*

##### **1.) Public forum/information sessions to hear different opinions, prioritise and establish regional commitment (umbrella group)**

Any knowledge exchanges with community members is beneficial to weeding possible miscommunications and misinterpretations people may have for particular groups. The development of an umbrella group would be to streamline common values and beliefs into 'one package' so to speak. A stronger voice would be more effective when lobbying government. There are emerging regional structures such as the Arrowsmith Watersheds Coalition that serves this purpose at a regional level. Efforts should be made to make such alliances, and case studies should be highlighted to show the success of such endeavours.

##### **2.) Outreach to get new volunteers and create high energy**

Community groups need to develop unique outreach systems to continually get new members and fresh energy to propel the group even more towards its goals.

##### **3.) "Regional" legislation**

Having legislation that applies in a regional context would be more effective to balancing local competing priorities. The community would have the final approval of such local legislation and would be able to work together to make sure that the views of all interests are represented. Policies and strategies for implementation of legislation needs to be tailored to local/regional needs. This can only be done through active participation of the community.

##### **4.) Resource Use: re-evaluate harvest rate**

***Barrier 3: Polarisation of community into different "camps"***

*Suggested Actions to Overcoming Barrier:*

**1.) Clear goals and focus on the goals not the competition**

A better understanding needs to be fostered between all different groups within the watershed. Goals of each group to be fleshed out and shared with the entire community as to avoid possible confusion and promote possible alliances between groups who share similar goals. These are of models of community based planning that work. There are steps such as visioning, and strategic planning - these are starting points by all community groups (BCWSA Watershed workbook)

**2.) Diverse broad based group - strategic building of "Alliance"-strength in numbers**

Uniting various community groups with similar goals into an "Alliance" strengthens its voice with government.

**3.) Start small and build on strength of existing groups**

This allows organizations to grow in accordance with their capacity on existing resources rather than efforts to duplicate or compete for the same people.

**4.) Recognition of government efforts/group efforts and piggy back on resources of other organizations**

It is important to recognize the importance of government activities in your watershed region. Cooperation with the government can only increase partnerships with their resources. All community members will facilitate this co-operation in order to establish common ground.

**5.) Build broader base with the community**

Incorporate as many views possible in the community, this will enhance the democratic will of the community and help promote an understanding of views across the spectrum.

**6.) Have a living working document that deals with ethics, consensus, dispute resolution to guide behaviour & operations**

**Barrier 4: Limited awareness/networking with other similar community/watershed organizations**

Suggested Actions to Overcoming Barrier:

**1.) Document working models and success stories - advertise/informal education**

There are a number of successes that should be documented to help in building a core and track record to support community watershed organizations.

**2.) Communication with all groups - internal understanding - through skill development**

The strength of any organisation is derived from the sum total of understanding, knowledge, and skills of all members of the community.

**3.) Hold workshop forums to highlight initiatives/aspirations**

Workshop forums are an excellent place to exchange information with one another of the aspirations of their respective community groups. This allows networking to take place and again helps limit duplication of actions.

**4.) Build a network to share information**

To help limit duplication of actions by similar groups in a watershed, a network should be built to allow groups to be aware of each other's actions. As well it will provide networking between these groups and encourage efforts to work alongside one another. There is a need to get rid of the idea of having the ultimate website, more rather to do with linking websites.

## **VI. Observations and Conclusion**

This work reflects the need for an ongoing process to continue to advance community involvement in watershed management. The common repeated suggestions raised by the barrier workshops, if tackled could assist the Province of British Columbia to advance in resolving current resource issues/watershed/community issues.

Core funding is needed to advance these suggestions and support from government agencies is imperative. A new social contract is required wherein communities jointly tackle barriers and proposed actions to advance watershed management in British Columbia.

## VII. Sources

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