

Summary Report

Our Water, Our Future

Third Annual BC Water Funders & Leaders Gathering

Hotel Grand Pacific, Victoria, BC
November 1st, 2018

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1. Introduction

This document summarizes the outcomes of the November 1st joint Water Leaders and Funders Workshop. This workshop was the third annual joint session between water leaders and funders, and built on several years of extensive collaborations to advance freshwater protection in B.C. The session provided an opportunity to consolidate progress made since the November 2017 gathering, and was intended as a forum for networking, relationship building, and information exchange.

The workshop was co-hosted by the BC Water Funders Collaborative and the POLIS Water Sustainability Project. Participants were invited as representatives from organizations with a provincial freshwater focus, and as members of the BC Water Funders Collaborative.

This Summary Report is intended only for circulation among workshop participants and invitees, as well as colleagues and members within their organizations.

Support for the BC Water Leaders & Funders workshop was provided by:



1.2 Meeting Goals

1. Ensure all participants have an up-to-date understanding of the evolving context for freshwater protection in BC, including:
 - a. Policy implementation and current political landscape;
 - b. Progress achieved since the November 2017 gathering in key topic areas; and,
 - c. Public opinion research and progress on keeping water on the agenda;

2. Identify ways in which funders' support for the water leaders' efforts and initiatives can be enhanced to maximize impact/efficiency/effectiveness.

3. Continue to strengthen relationships and networks between water funders and water leaders, and build shared understanding of each other's activities and priorities

1.3 Scope of Format & Discussion

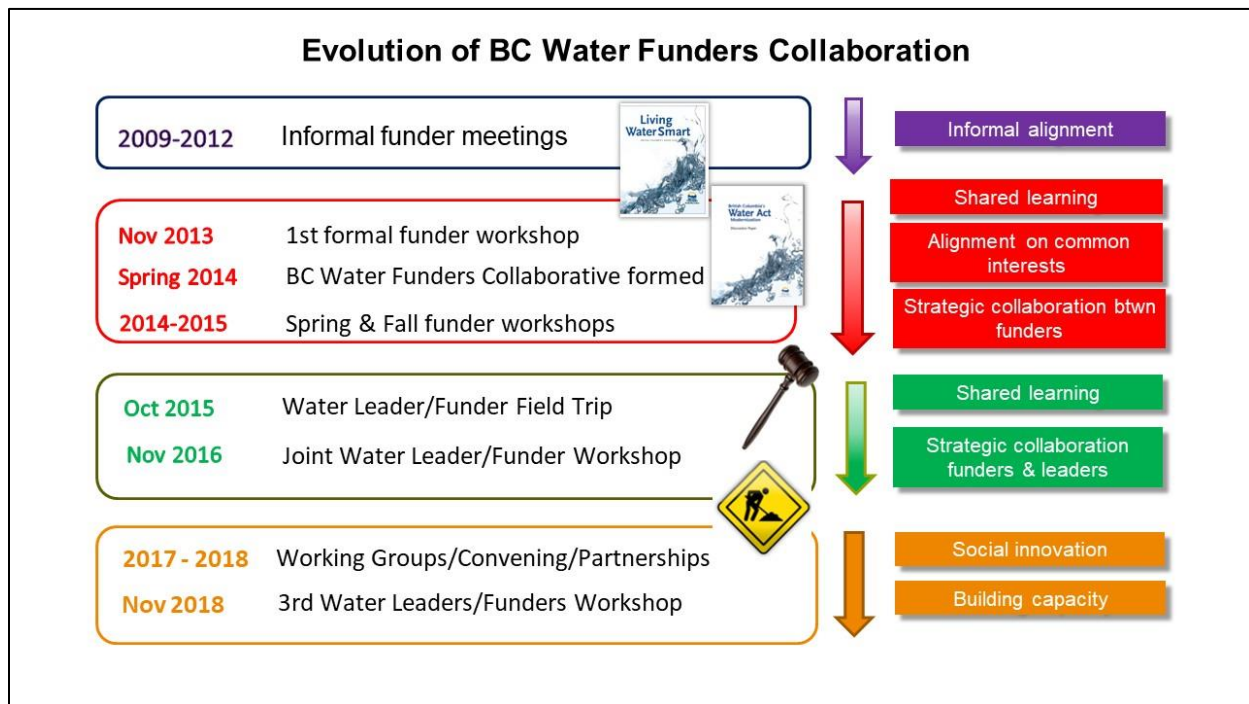
To encourage frank dialogue and discussion, the workshop was conducted under a modified 'Chatham House' rule. Under this rule, participants are at liberty to share the participants list with others and may use the information they have received at the workshop but may not attribute any particular comment or viewpoint to any individual or organization.

2. Transforming How We Work Together: Strengthening the Leader-Funder Interface

This session began with an overview of the BC Water Funders Collaborative (“Collaborative”) and a discussion of how the Collaborative interfaces with water leaders. Next, key findings were shared from an October 2018 e-survey distributed to water leaders which sought to identify the ways in which funders’ activities and processes could better support water leaders’ initiatives. This session provided an opportunity for facilitated small group discussions—workshop participants identified ways in which funders and leaders can work better together and discussed funder and water leader organizational constraints and opportunities.

2.1 Evolution of BC Water Funders Collaborative

The Collaborative has evolved and engaged extensively with the freshwater community over the past 5 years:



Since its formation in 2014, the Collaborative has sought to support **coordination and strategic alignment** among water funders in order to advance freshwater protection in BC. The Collaborative was primarily created to provide services to funders and does not itself have a granting program. Over the last few years, the Collaborative has increasingly sought to provide a **forum for exchange of information and peer learning** between water funders and water leaders by strengthening relationships and sharing knowledge.

At the fifth Spring Funders Workshop in April 2018, members reflected on the Collaborative’s strategic approach, and decided to add two new goals:

1. Convene & Connect
2. Build Knowledge
3. Align & Leverage Resources
4. **NEW: Catalyze to Address Gaps**
5. **NEW: Water Leaders Support Strategy**

The Collaborative’s first three goals have sought to address the overarching goal of building a community of aligned funders. The two new goals recognize the increasing role that the Collaborative is playing within the broader freshwater community:

Catalyze to Address Gaps	This goal is intended to recognize the work that the Collaborative is doing in bringing together funders, leaders and government to catalyze discussions and identify opportunities in the strategic areas of focus (e.g. convening roundtables that helped catalyze the Sustainable Funding for Watershed Governance Initiative, BC Freshwater Legacy Initiative, BC Water Monitoring Initiative).
Water Leaders Support Strategy	The development of this strategy is an effort to explicitly recognize the unique role that the Collaborative can play in bridging the funder community with the broader leader community, and to help funders support and learn from water leaders and identify strategies to increase our collective impact (e.g. through direct engagement, strategic discussion, developing tools to reduce administrative impact on water leader organizations, while respecting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • diversity of funders and programs; • individual grant-making decisions; and • geographic and governance constraints

2.2 Highlights of the BC Water Leaders Survey

The [2018 Water Leaders Feedback Survey](#) was sent to 35 water leaders in October, 2018 to learn from leaders’ experiences and identify additional ways that the Collaborative membership can better support water leaders. To date, 11 responses have been received. Given the small sample size, responses are not considered representative of the water leaders community. However, the responses provide a snapshot of common themes around the funding challenges and opportunities for water leader organizations (see the key highlights slide below).

Feedback from this survey will help inform the development of the Collaborative's strategic priorities, including future opportunities to coordinate with water leaders. The survey will remain open for ongoing feedback from water leaders.

Water Leaders Feedback Survey - Key Highlights

- **Feedback on past joint activities**
 - Joint workshops and activities have been **positive for relationships**
 - Innovative approach, strengthened relationships, common understanding of issues/strategies
- **Recommendations: Opportunities to Strengthen Interface**
 - Desire for **more active discussion** and not just one-way transmission of info
 - Request for better **understanding of individual funders strategic priorities**
 - Funders could explore opportunities to **simplify and align application processes**
 - Eg. Shorter, simplified, incremental approach (start with letter of intent), on-line, plain language, portal for several funders, strategic targets to foster collaboration, multiple in-takes
 - Funders could explore opportunities to **improve reporting processes**
 - Eg. Reporting to multiple funders twice per year in a six to ten-page format, exit interviews, narrative, financials, technical reports; more flexible for deadlines, resources to support reporting
 - Collectively identify opportunities to **pool resources** on activities that benefit larger community (eg. evaluations, polling, research)

The survey asked leaders to rank several activities to identify how much value they would provide to their organization. All of these activities were ranked very highly (>4/5) but ultimately this was the order of importance:

What Matters Most to Leaders (Ranked)

1. Multi-year funding
2. Core funding to support staff
3. Aligned reporting process
4. Aligned application process
5. User friendly on-line application processes
6. Up to date information about funders granting priorities & deadlines
7. Funding for strategic coordination with other water groups
8. Joint workshops and fieldtrips

Other suggested activities: Bridging with gov't, recruitment of new funders, coordination to keep the larger collective informed.

2.3 Activity: Small Group Discussion

For this activity, workshop participants divided into four small groups. Participants brainstormed how funders and leaders can work better together and reflected on funder and water leader organizational constraints and opportunities. The following instructions were provided:

Funders: For this exercise, you are leaders of an NGO with a provincial focus on freshwater protection. *What kind of challenges do you face in applying, receiving and reporting on grants?*

Leaders: For this exercise, you are a grantmaker in a large funding organization which has, as one of its many programs, a funding program in freshwater protection. *What are some of the challenges you face when making grants?*

Participants were encouraged to stay in character while they collectively identified opportunities to improve the interface between leaders and funders and were also asked to identify the **two best opportunities** to be highlighted in the activity report-back.

Results of the small group discussion are provided in **Appendix B**.

2.4 Report back: Top 2 Opportunities to Strengthen the Leader-Funder Interface

The following opportunities to strengthen the water leader-funder interface were highlighted in the report-back from the small group activity:

- Support the water leaders' network through **increased collaboration** – between water leaders and funders, but also broader water community (e.g. work towards advancing strategic priorities)
- Commit to **adaptive learning** – in the context of climate change and shifting water leader and funder priorities
- **Create structures and spaces** to advance information sharing, relationship building and facilitated discussion between leaders and funders, including funders' boards
- **Reduce challenges and burdens around funding applications/reporting** (e.g. align schedules and templates for reporting)
- **Find creative ways for leaders' reporting (e.g. interviews, field visits)**
- Provide opportunities for **collective evaluation from multiple funders**, sharing the capacity burden

Next Steps

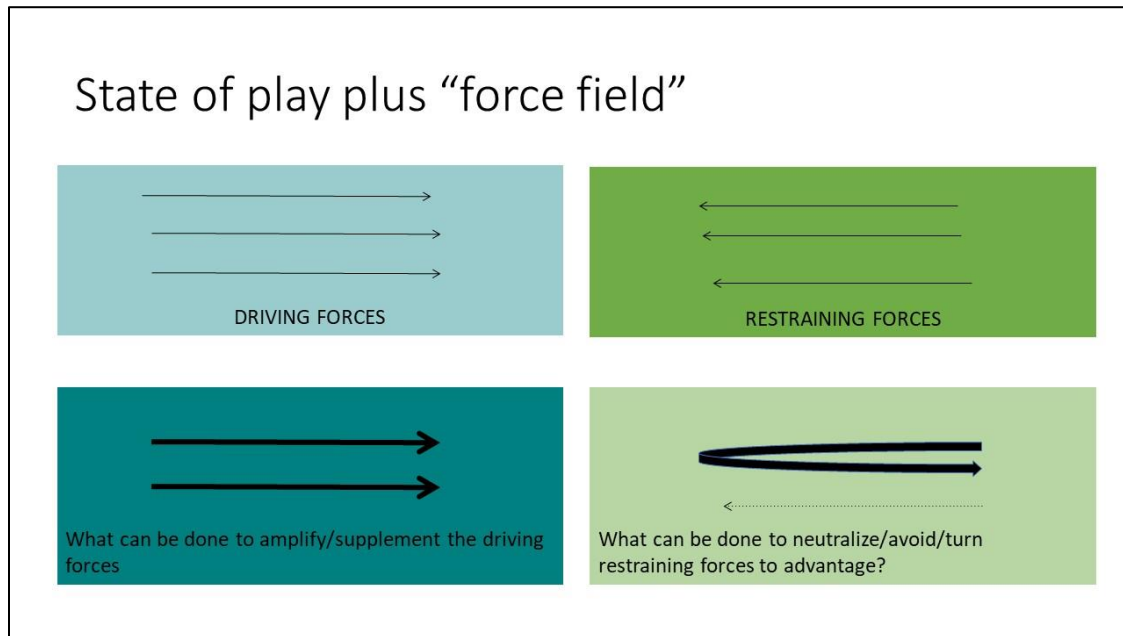
- The [2018 Water Leaders Feedback Survey](#) will be left open for those that want to add additional comments
- Funders have an opportunity to discuss the feedback and further identify opportunities and next steps
- Survey Results and the workshop discussion will be communicated to entire membership of the Collaborative and will inform activities for 2019 Workplan.

3. Lightning Round Updates

The objective of this session was to ensure all participants received an up-to-date understanding of the evolving context for freshwater protection in BC. The presentations offered updates on the state of play in the following areas:

- Provincial and federal water policy progress;
- Provincial government update;
- Indigenous-led approaches; and
- Pooling water knowledge

Speakers highlighted key trends/changes within their given area of work over the last year. They commented on what factors are driving progress in their theme area, and suggested how these drivers might be amplified, what forces are constraining progress, and identified how these might be addressed (see slide for illustration of ‘state of play’ and ‘force field’ framework).



3.1 Provincial and Federal Water Policy Progress

Provincial water policy progress:

Water Sustainability Act Phase II regulations updates

- Groundwater licensing: Ministry of Environment & Climate Change Strategy (ENV) is supporting the Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development (FLNRORD), but uptake has been slow
- Regulatory amendments and operational policies: underway for environmental flows, groundwater, placer mining water use (exploration, drainage from mine sites), and livestock watering

The Province's priorities are to: support science and monitoring and reporting; support a modernized land use planning program; support water objectives (as policy options that align with cumulative effects); and support water sustainability plans and watershed governance pilots (which will be used to test WSA tools and refine policy).

It was highlighted that water management responsibilities are shared across the Province's natural resource sector model, with discrete roles for ENV, FLNRORD and the Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation (MIRR) (see slide below).

Environment and Climate Change Strategy	Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development	Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provincial water strategies • Water policy, legislation, regulations • Watershed, aquifer science • Water objectives, standards and guidelines • Advice, guidance and support to statutory decisions • Support enforcement through COS • Monitoring networks • Transboundary and inter- governmental agreements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administer the WSA, including all statutory decisions for surface and groundwater licenses • Other programs and related statutes: e.g. dam/dike safety, flood and drought management, utility regulation • Issue enforcement orders • Monitoring and reporting • Joint leadership of WSA including developing pilots, plans, agreements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead BC Government in pursuing reconciliation with First Nations and Indigenous Peoples of BC • Advance and implement G2G agreements with Indigenous Nations, including supporting plans and pilots associated with WSA • Adopt and implement UNDRIP, TRC Calls to Action, including reviewing policies, programs, legislation to bring UNDRIP principles into action in BC
<p>POLICY, LEGISLATION, SCIENCE, MONITORING + WSA PLANS & PILOTS</p>	<p>DELIVERY, STATUTORY DECISION-MAKING + WSA PLANS & PILOTS</p>	<p>RECONCILIATION, G2G AGREEMENTS + WSA PLANS & PILOTS</p>

Watershed Governance Pilot in the Nicola Valley

The Province of BC, the Nicola First Nations and the BC Freshwater Legacy Initiative developed a partnership to advance a watershed governance pilot project in the Nicola watershed. An MOU was signed in March 2018 between the Province and five Chiefs representing the Nicola First Nations, initiating a partnership agreement to sustainably govern water resources in the Nicola watershed. Momentum is building for this initiative and the partnership model is promising (for details, see [this press release](#)).

This project provides an excellent opportunity to advance shared goals of freshwater protection, reconciliation and a sustainable economy. The government-to-government partnership will test innovative approaches, including new *Water Sustainability Act* tools (e.g. water objectives, water sustainability plans, and environmental flows) and explore ways for those tools to work with the laws of the Nlaka'pamux and Syilx peoples in the watershed.

Hullcar Aquifer Review

In August 2017, the Minister of Environment and Climate Change Strategy ordered a review of the Hullcar aquifer situation to gather information to improve management and decision-making related to source water protection and agricultural nutrients. As part of this review, the Ministry commissioned a review team led by the University of Victoria's POLIS Project on Ecological Governance, who subsequently produced the recommendations report [From Crisis to Solutions: Towards Better Source Water Protection and Nutrient Management in the Hullcar Valley](#) (November, 2017). Government is in the process of responding to the report's recommendations.

Hullcar Aquifer Review (continued)

- Government has reported that the nitrate balance in the aquifer is improving, and that an Agricultural Waste Control Regulation is being updated for release in fall 2018 or early 2019. A local Advisory Board has also been established.
- Government has not formally addressed development of an area-based management plan or the need for longer-term provincial level reforms to ensure this situation does not occur in other regions. The BC Auditor General's source protection investigation is still ongoing.
- It was noted that Hullcar is the tip of the iceberg—source water drinking threats are likely common throughout BC. Source drinking water protection is an important area of high interest for this government and remains a powerful issue/vehicle for community engagement and organizing (e.g. Shawnigan, Comox, Ymir).

Modernized strategic land-use planning program

- The Province will use a more holistic engagement framework to develop its modernized land-use planning program. Planning will occur at multiple scales, with specific, balanced, and measurable objectives for values. Partnerships will be sought with First Nations governments and targeted engagement with key stakeholders or advisory committees are intended to build wide community support.

2018 UBCM water and waterway [resolutions](#)

- Nine resolutions related to water and waterway protection were endorsed at the 2018 UBCM conference, including: *A2 – Protecting local waterways & wild fish species*, *B34 – Implementation of Water Sustainability Act*, and *B67 – Watershed Governance Model*.

CVRD Watershed Protection Service Referendum passes

- As part of the October 2018 municipal elections, the Cowichan Valley Regional District's referendum to establish a Drinking Water and Watershed Protection Service passed with 66%. The service will allow an annual requisition based on property value, generating approximately \$750,000. This service will enable better planning and clear roles and responsibilities for local governments. It will also provide modest funding for the Cowichan Watershed Board and other interest groups in the Cowichan watershed.

Federal water policy progress:

Several law and policy reforms are underway, including modernization of the *Fisheries Act* to include habitat protection and with renewed attention to a *Wild Salmon Policy*. Renewal of the largely dormant *Canada Water Act* is also being considered.

Conclusions from forthcoming report *BC Freshwater Policy Monitor*:

Offering another source of insight for these updates, key recommendations to improve Provincial freshwater policy were shared from the forthcoming report *BC Freshwater Policy Monitor* (POLIS, winter 2018):

- **Comprehensive *Water Sustainability Act* implementation with Indigenous co-leadership.** Government is expected to follow through with Phase II regulations, and expand to three to five watershed governance pilots to test new tools and inform regulation/policy development.
- **Review Provincial Water Rentals.** Without adequate resourcing, further progress will be limited.
- **Develop an overarching water knowledge strategy.** This strategy would: enhance water use measurement and reporting, increase hydrometric and climate monitoring, leverage community-based monitoring, make information publicly accessible, and incorporate Indigenous knowledge.

Key Discussion Question

B.C. communities and First Nations were poorly engaged when the Province's land-use planning process was developed, will they be better engaged in the modernized process?

Response: There is a real opportunity for public input and to influence the process— it will likely be under resourced, but it opens up significant space for innovation.

3.2 Provincial Government Context

The State of Play for the B.C. provincial government context was characterized as follows:

- **Reconciliation mandate:** Government's mandate to adopt UNDRIP and advance reconciliation has created an evolving relationship between government and First Nations – across Ministries and issues, reconciliation considerations are top-of-mind.
- The BC Green Party and New Democratic Party also have an evolving, relationship that is for the most part respectful and cooperative.
- **Professional Reliance Review.** Government has responded to the first two recommendations in this 2018 report: an independent Office of Professional Regulation and Oversight has been established, and the *Professional Governance Act* was tabled in October 2018.
- **2021 Provincial Election:** It is not too early to think about what we want to see in party platforms in the 2021 election. Consider: what is the big picture vision that might inspire the changes we want to see in the next term? Should water be the lens through which a future government talks about resource management?

DRIVING FORCES	ACTIONS TO AMPLIFY/ SUPPLEMENT DRIVING FORCES
Reconciliation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Articulation of First Nations water priorities ▪ Watershed planning
Professional Reliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Engagement with government on water objectives
Land-use planning process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Interface with watershed planning ▪ Encourage Government to reclaim its role as the province’s land manager

RESTRAINING FORCES	ACTIONS TO NEUTRALIZE/AVOID/ TURN RESTRAINING FORCES TO ADVANTAGE
Civil service overwhelmed with work (esp. FLNRORD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Use existing priorities/frames (i.e. nothing is “new”) and encourage step-wise progress ▪ Offer tools and supplemental research

Key Discussion Comment

The notion of the Province reclaiming its role as the ‘land manager’ will resonate with many groups/communities, who want the Province to reassume its responsibilities for overseeing land stewardship and keeping track of ‘the bigger picture’.

3.3 Indigenous-led Approaches

In the past year, three key changes in Indigenous-led approaches to freshwater planning and governance have occurred:

1) **Expressions of Crown commitments to reconciliation.** These expressions have occurred in: government-to-government arrangements, including through stewardship agreements, the Indigenous Leadership Initiative, and the Nicola watershed governance partnership. A significant amount of funding is also available for First Nations to engage in water governance and law reform. However, Provincial staff do not always have clear direction on how to implement UNDRIP, which is causing some confusion.

2) **Emergence of the BC First Nations Water Governance Roundtable.** The Roundtable seeks to provide a platform for First Nations to develop collective messages around their governance activities. Better guidance is still needed on how UNDRIP will interface with Indigenous-led water governance in BC.

3) **Growth of Indigenous-led initiatives.** For example, the Syilx (Okanagan Nation) is deepening its water governance program through the development of a Syilx Water Responsibility Planning methodology. Water law revitalization initiatives are ever increasing through West Coast Environmental Law’s [RELAW project](#) and the [Indigenous Law Research Unit](#), based at the University of Victoria.

Despite the increase in projects and available funds, the current state of progress is slow. It will take time for new Indigenous-led initiatives to fully form and become equipped with sufficient support and capacity.

DRIVING FORCES	ACTIONS TO AMPLIFY/ SUPPLEMENT DRIVING FORCES
Crown commitments to reconciliation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Press for action and implementation
Strategic necessity of collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Enable collaboration opportunities
# of initiatives providing support to First Nations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Advance sustainable funding opportunities

RESTRAINING FORCES	ACTIONS TO NEUTRALIZE/AVOID/ TURN RESTRAINING FORCES TO ADVANTAGE
Reluctance to acknowledge Indigenous authority and jurisdiction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Press for acknowledgement(s)
Constrained resource capacity of First Nations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Advance sustainable funding opportunities
Fragmentation of Indigenous communities and governments to engage in freshwater stewardship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Enable collaboration opportunities

Opportunities for advancing Indigenous-led Approaches in 2018/19:

- **First Nations Engagement Framework for the *Water Sustainability Act* regulation and policy development**—The Province is developing a new *WSA* engagement framework to better engage First Nations communities. With the bigger regulations (e.g. environmental flows) still to come, it is important to track how this engagement framework takes shape.
- **Nicola watershed pilot**—monitor progress and see when other pilot regions identified
- **Scaling up of Indigenous-led initiatives** (e.g. Yinka Dene Water Declaration, Sylix water governance initiatives)
- **Advancing the funding conversation** through the Fiscal Systemic Barriers to First Nations Governance project (technical backgrounder expected in early 2019)

Key Discussion Question

Can you offer any guidance to non-Indigenous organizations who want to better engage First Nations in their work, but are unsure how to navigate the various tools and frameworks?

Start with the talking to the First Nations communities you're working with. Consultation on *everything* isn't feasible, but communities will often indicate what is of interest/priority. First Nations need the time and space to develop their own responses and build internal capacity to respond to issues. It may also be helpful to reference guidelines on UNDRIP implementation, prepared by law firms, consultants, and academics.

3.4 Pooling Water Knowledge

The 'pooling water knowledge' pillar considers the ways to improve water data availability, accessibility and integration, and draws upon western science and traditional knowledge. The State of Play for pooling water knowledge was characterized as follows:

- Regional and issue-specific monitoring initiatives are filling data gaps. Vertical integration from local to federal governments is taking place.
- New technology and methods for water monitoring (e.g. Environmental DNA emerging as an indicator of water quality)
- Increasing efforts to share data through new data portals and a trend towards "open data"
- Recognition of data/knowledge as currency: "Monitoring is the gateway to governance"

DRIVING FORCES	ACTIONS TO AMPLIFY/ SUPPLEMENT DRIVING FORCES
Leadership at regional/issue-specific level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Build on existing leadership
Lack of accessible/relevant data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Build from the ground up and maintain momentum
Low confidence in regulatory & compliance monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognize the role of data in relationship-building

RESTRAINING FORCES	ACTIONS TO NEUTRALIZE/AVOID/ TURN RESTRAINING FORCES TO ADVANTAGE
Operating in silos	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Collaborate and build on existing partnerships
Lack of capacity for data: (1) storage, organization and management; (2) access and distribution; (3) analysis and interpretation; (4) communication and reporting; and (5) planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Build capacity
Fragmentation of Indigenous communities and governments to engage in freshwater stewardship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Enable collaboration opportunities

4. Keeping Water on the Agenda

A program update was provided for Keeping Water on the Agenda (KWOTA), a joint program led by Canadian Freshwater Alliance and the Talking Water Project, with support from local and provincial advocacy organizations. The goal of KWOTA is to educate and engage British Columbians in support of strong water policies and programs, and to demonstrate this support to decision-makers.

KWOTA's recent public education and engagement initiatives:

- **Drought message guide:** [10 Essential Messages for Communicating about Drought](#) (July, 2018) offers a framework for effective communication, sample messaging and an outline of how the WSA can help address water scarcity.
- At least 50 media articles/segments about BC's droughts were tracked for summer 2018, not including national coverage.
- **River IQ:** KWOTA partners developed River IQ, a web-based game that has been used to connect with the public at events and online through the summer and fall. The goal is for British Columbians to learn more about their watershed. As a result, 1,300 new supporters have been added to partner contact lists, and three radio interviews were generated, including a segment for CBC's [Radio West](#) (hear Coree Tull at 3:55).
- **Local campaigns & watershed governance:** A number of place-based initiatives have been the focus of KWOTA efforts this summer and fall, including support to: the Vancouver Island Drinking Water Campaign; opposition to groundwater extraction in the Comox Valley (see the message guide and advocacy tool, [Action for our Aquifers](#)); responding to drinking water contamination concerns in Spallumcheen by drafting and pitching the op-ed: [Water crises like Hullcar need stronger government leadership](#) (Vernon Morning Star, Sept. 26); and in anticipation of municipal elections, aggregation of resources that illustrated the important role municipal governments play in protecting freshwater and the development and publicizing of a Municipal Candidate Freshwater [survey](#) in ten communities throughout the Lower Mainland, Fraser Valley and Vancouver Island.

4.1 Key Findings from Public Opinion Research

A public opinion poll was conducted in June 2018 by McAllister Opinion Research to examine how British Columbians understand and view water issues. Poll results have helped guide KWOTA activities, including the development of a coordinated communications campaign around the Cowichan Valley Regional District's [referendum](#) on a new Drinking Water and Watershed Protection Service, which passed with 66% as part of the municipal elections in October.

Poll findings indicate that the public does not generally rank fresh water as a top concern, nor is there a sense of urgency to protect fresh water. Sixty percent of British Columbians do not know which watershed provides their drinking water. And while pollution is the number one threat to drinking water quality, only 19% of poll respondents believe that their drinking water is polluted. There is a clear need to build a sense of urgency around water problems and encourage buy-in around the benefits of innovative solutions. With water at the heart of many environmental issues in BC, there is a growing opportunity for organizations to deliver a *clear, universal ask* for consideration and protection of fresh water, and to integrate this messaging across campaigns and organizations.

4.2 Public Engagement and Campaign Activities

Water leader organizations are advancing community engagement and campaigns around freshwater issues in BC, and momentum is building:

Public engagement: The WSA's process of issuing water licenses continues to aggravate some users and groups. The Canadian Freshwater Alliance (CFA) initiated an advocacy campaign with interest groups in the Comox Valley in response to an application to bottle and sell water extracted from the local aquifer. CFA created communications materials and provided guidance and resources to the local interest groups. Comox Valley Regional District ultimately denied the application, citing non-support from the community and a lack of public consultation. This decision has sparked conversations about leveraging this opportunity, and replicating these efforts in other regions of the province.

Municipal engagement: There is an opportunity to bridge influencers and decision-makers with people working on-the-ground to advance freshwater protection. CFA also provides primers to candidates running in municipal elections and distributes flyers to local communities on where candidates stand on freshwater issues.

Drought narrative: The Drought Message Guide and op-eds in local papers have helped advance the public drought narrative in BC (see KWOTA program update for details).

River IQ: With over 4,000 online visitors in a single month, this educational game shows the value of using a digital platform to start conversations with British Columbians about local waters and rivers (see KWOTA program update for details).

5. Next Steps

- An evening networking/socializing event for workshop participants was held at the Robert Bateman Centre. Opening remarks were provided by Hon. Doug Donaldson (Minister of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development), and several representatives from FLNRORD and ENV were in attendance.
- The Organizing Committee prepared a Workshop Summary Report shortly after the workshop. While the report is not intended to be strictly confidential, it is primarily intended for circulation among workshop participants and their colleagues.
- Participants were invited to provide feedback on the workshop, via an [online survey](#). The results will inform the design and delivery of future joint workshops.
- Both Water Funders and Water Leaders convened separately the next day to reflect on outcomes of the joint session and refine respective next steps.

Appendix A: Workshop Participants

Water Leaders

- Zita Botelho, Sustainable Funding for Watershed Governance Initiative
- Deborah Curran, University of Victoria Faculty of Law and Environmental Law Centre
- Sutton Eaves, Talking Water Project
- Elizabeth Hendriks, WWF-Canada
- Aaron Hill, Watershed Watch Salmon Society
- Steve Litke, Fraser Basin Council
- Carol Luttmmer, Living Lakes Canada
- Alan Martin, BC Wildlife Federation
- Lisa Matthaus, Organizing for Change
- Jon O’Riordan, POLIS/Adaptation to Climate Change Team
- Natasha Overduin, POLIS/Centre for Indigenous Environmental Resources
- Ben Parfitt, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives-BC
- Susi Porter-Bopp, First Nations Fisheries Council
- Lindsay Telfer, Canadian Freshwater Alliance
- Coree Tull, Canadian Freshwater Alliance

Water Funders

- Kariann Aarup, de Gaspé Beaubien Foundation
- Jacquie Belzile, Pacific Salmon Foundation
- Nick Davies, Real Estate Foundation of BC
- Kim Hardy, Tides Canada
- David Hendrickson, Real Estate Foundation of BC
- Deena Guffei, LUSH Cosmetics
- James, Littley, Okanagan Basin Water Board
- Ian Rogalski, Environment Canada
- Carmen Ryujin, Royal Bank of Canada
- Leanne Sexsmith, Real Estate Foundation of BC
- Ivan Thompson, Tides Canada
- Shayla Walker, Tides Canada

Resource Team

- Alex Etchell, BC Water Funders Collaborative
- Jennifer Archer, BC Water Funders Collaborative
- Tim Morris, BC Water Funders Collaborative
- Oliver M. Brandes, POLIS
- Rosie Simms, POLIS
- Megan Spencer, POLIS
- Rebeca Macias Gimenez, University of Victoria

Appendix B: Summary of Small Group Discussion

The following summary reflects a synthesis of key points shared in the small group discussions. Organized by themes, this summary provides a snap-shot of challenges and opportunities to improve the water leader-funder interface.

Water Leader Challenges in Receiving Grants

Challenges in proposal writing and making a project ‘fit’ with funder focus/priorities

- Proposal writing constraints (e.g. word counts, lack of understanding of funder priorities)
- Uncertainty with how to focus/frame a project – only so much ‘space’ to describe your project/program, and need to try to align with the focus/angle and/or theory of change for the specific funder
- Innovative projects may not fit into a box – need to convince funder to think creatively and anticipate deliverables in a dynamic context
- Hard to convey your organization’s “unique impact” in this large field with many players
- Uncertainty around funding organizations’ shifting priorities (which are not always publicly communicated) and how to navigate different organizational cultures

Challenges in preparing applications, reporting, timelines, evaluations

- Lack of personal contact with the funding agency (e.g. organizational bureaucracy and need to talk to “the right person”)
- Unfriendly or burdensome application process (e.g. budget restrictions, technical issues with online applications)
- Difficult to manage expectations for what outcomes can be achieved with awarded funds
- Reporting to multiple funders with various reporting requirements, formats, and timelines
- Reporting and evaluation for funders is constant (short windows for reporting back)
- Hard to measure impact of a project; goals not always clearly defined
- Constant justification for why funding/project is needed
- Leaders nervous to be transparent about why a project didn’t work or go according to plan – flexibility from funders needed
- New ideas/projects take time to grow and succeed - lingering “fear of failure”

Challenges in securing matching funding, core funding, and broader funding strategies

- Leveraging matching funding can be a challenge
- Need for core funding (e.g. staff salaries), not just project-specific
- Funding strategies – who ‘owns’ the strategy? Desire for strategies to come from leaders, or at least show connection between leader input and funder strategy

Water Funder Challenges in Making Grants

Challenges in deciding which initiatives/organizations to fund

- Many applicants, limited funds
- Difficult for funders to articulate what they want to support/advance but need to ensure projects 'fit' within funding program interests/scope
- Duplication/similar work by different leader organizations – unsure who to fund, for what, and if/how the organizations work together (what are their respective strengths, roles?)
- How to determine which organization will have the most impact, e.g. how important is organizational seniority vs. new/fresh organizations?
- Want to support new innovation but ongoing support needed for existing project
- When do you pull out of long-term, multi-term projects to support new groups?
- Wary of creating dependency from leaders – striving for sustainability
- Challenge of advancing systems change; do projects address root causes or symptoms?
- Acknowledging power dynamic when money is involved – how do you share power?

Challenges with assessing project outcomes and 'field visit' evaluations

- Determining value for funds invested – difficulties with using assessment tools/reporting
- Does the budget match the activities – e.g. 'scope creep' and changing circumstances
- Interacting more with leaders (e.g. visiting sites) is an expense – higher interaction comes with a price tag
- Need to decide whether to get more involved with projects or stay in a back-seat role

Balancing funding agency board/staff perspectives and managing expectations

- Grantmaker boards and staff interpret impact statements and strategies differently
- Need to strike the balance: what the funder's Board wants versus what community/organizations say is needed
- Funders try to be clear on expectations and priorities but managing multiple files

Individual challenges with funders' knowledge, capacity, and politics

- How knowledgeable does a funder need to be when funding such diverse projects across areas of work? How much of an expert do you need to be?
- How to choose from a diverse set of projects? Need to keep personal knowledge up to speed on complex and diverse topics
- Easy to become "pigeon-holed" in your role and not see the bigger picture
- Limited capacity and carrying the weight/responsibility of their role personally
- Internal conflict and politics among individuals in a funding agency
- Assertiveness training for funders could be helpful – learning to say "no"