

# Summary Report

## Fourth Annual Water Leaders & Water Funders Gathering



Nicola Watershed tour and workshops at the Nicola Valley Institute of Technology  
Merritt, B.C.  
October 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>, 2019



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## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Background

The workshop was hosted on Nlaka'pamux and Syilx traditional territories from October 16-17, 2019. This was the fourth annual joint session between water leaders and funders, and was designed to build upon ongoing strategic collaborations to advance freshwater protection in B.C.

This year, the Nicola Chiefs and the Nicola Watershed Governance Project hosted 70 participants— the water funders and leaders, along with the First Nations Water Governance Roundtable and other guests from the Cowichan and provincial government— for a field trip and classroom session to share their innovative watershed governance partnership. The field trip included stops at the Coldwater River (see photo to the right), the north end of Nicola Lake, the Arbor in the community of Shulus (see photo below), and Guichon Creek.



The funders and leaders extend a special thank-you to elder June Shackelly of the Coldwater band, Chief Lee Spahan, Councilor Aaron Sumexheltza, Chief Stuart Jackson, Chief Jordan Joe, Councilor Brian Holmes, Eva Tom - Indigenous Laws Research Liaison, and G2G staff Nadia Joe and Patrick Farmer for making this day possible, engaging and very informative. Events like this demonstrate the world-class watershed co-governance models that are emerging in B.C. and offer concrete insights into what reconciliation involves in the context of partnerships for freshwater sustainability.

The field trip was followed by a day of Water Leaders & Funders meetings which (similar to past years) provided a forum for exchanging information and updates, consolidating our collective progress on core water priorities since the November 2018 gathering, and strategic dialogue on opportunities and next steps.

This document summarizes the outcomes of the October 17th joint Water Leaders and Funders Workshop. While it is not intended to be strictly confidential, it is primarily intended for circulation among workshop participants and their colleagues

### 1.2 Meeting Goals

- Strengthen our understanding of the water issues, priorities, and G2G approach in the Nicola
- Confirm the value and evolution of our networked approach (shared water leaders' strategy; funders' strategic planning efforts and updates).
- Ensure leaders & funders have an up-to-date understanding of progress, opportunities, challenges, and strategic opportunities to collaborate in key topic areas:
  - Policy implementation and government update
  - Place-based governance & Indigenous-led initiatives
  - Pooling Water Knowledge
  - People - public engagement
- Build on existing relationships and networks between water leaders and water funders and forge new connections with the First Nations Roundtable.

## 2. Highlights Reel- noteworthy recent highlights and upcoming events

In this session, leaders and funders shared select highlights of recent activities and upcoming events. This was not an exhaustive scan; additional leaders updates are captured in the Updates Brief.

- [Fraser Riverkeeper of Swim Drink Fish](#) - conducting monitoring at the Fraser River/False Creek to get a representative understanding of water quality.
- [Tapped Out Report](#) - highlighting water scarcity in B.C.
- **Code Blue** – emerging campaign effort; video highlights many calls to action.
- **Global Climate Strike**. LUSH participated, supporting the youth-led movement.
- [Auditor General Report on Drinking Water](#) - accountability to protect drinking water is of “grave concern”.
- [Aquahacking](#) - OBWB hosting the BC-wide challenge. Oct. 29 at UBCO is the kickoff, the finale is in June in Kelowna.
- [Water Sustainability Plans \(WSP\) Innovation Brief](#) - explores the potential of WSP as a powerful new legal tool and offers direction around possible WSP structures and outcomes.
- [Columbia Basin Water Monitoring Collaborative](#) - collaborative is in action, continuing to explore options and partnerships for water monitoring and reporting collaboration at the national/federal level.
- [Rivershed Society](#) - aiming to create \$500 million fund to restore the Fraser River, increasing protection from 17% to 30% in the next 10 years.
- [Fraser Basin Council](#) - Nicola Basin Collaborative brings together government, industry, tech, and Shuswap groups and figure out management tools.

## 3. Evolving Our Networks

This session focused on the evolution and the recent developments in both the Water Leaders network and BC Water Funders Collaborative. Tim Morris (BC Water Funders Collaborative) provided opening framing about the benefits of taking a networked approach, including:

- Bringing together multiple strengths and perspectives to tackle large problems & improves collective understanding and strategy.
- Allowing people to focus on what they are good at and ensure resources are used more efficiently.
- Identifying key capacity gaps and needs
- Providing connections and a sense of being part of a bigger effort – it is less lonely!

**“Networked nonprofits forge long-term partnerships with trusted peers to tackle their missions on multiple fronts.”**

- The networked nonprofit



**The collective work of the Water Leaders & Funders helps to bridge connections between groups, identify gaps and priorities, and align strategies.**

### Water Leaders Strategy & Evolving Our Shared Efforts (Rosie Simms, POLIS)

This presentation provided an overview of work done over the past year to develop a living Water Leaders Strategy (see Briefing Package) as an evolution of Water Leaders’ efforts.

The Water Leaders (WL) network has been building for over 10 years:

- Catalyzed by the 2008 Living Water Smart Strategy: a small group of leaders/funders saw the plan and opportunity to modernize the WSA as a key way to have influence on water in B.C.

This grew into an informal affiliation of organizations and individuals working on water at provincial scale and interested in engaging strategically on provincial policy.

- The group generally convened biannually during WSA development with key interventions like Statements of Expectation, targeted media efforts, etc. The water leaders' coordinated approach has had significant impacts:

**Successes to-date:**

- Direct impact on WSA process + content
  - Statements of Expectation
  - Mobilizing & driving in key moments
- Strengthening leader-funder linkages
  - 3X shared meetings
  - Knowledge building
- Connections & strategic collaborations – e.g.
  - Budget 2020
  - Elevating water priority

- In recent years the context and focus has shifted:
  - From a narrow target of getting the WSA passed to broader/more diverse areas of work related to promoting sustainable freshwater management and governance – generally framed under the umbrella of the 4 Ps (People, Places, Policy, Pooling knowledge).
  - A shift in who is involved
  - More diverse provincial priorities

*In the context of these shifts and moving parts there is a risk that leaders' efforts lose cohesion. While leaders are a loose group with many different priorities, there is also value in having a cross-cutting framework and set of shared outcomes*

*to guide our collective efforts.* To facilitate this, over the past year, a core group of leaders drafted a *Water Leader Strategy*. The strategy is organized around the “4Ps” - Policy, Place-Based Governance, Pooling Water Knowledge, and People/Public Engagement. The strategy has been designed as a guiding document. It is intended to evolve and change but serves as tool to show how efforts are adding up to a collective whole, supporting leader collaboration and alignment.

## WHY - Strategy purpose & benefits

### WHAT IT DOES

- ✓ Guiding document - adding a bit more structure/support to work already underway
- ✓ Identify some shared goalposts: show how efforts are adding up to collective whole
- ✓ Tool to support active collaboration and alignment
- ✓ A way to track overall progress and ID gaps



### WHAT IT DOES NOT

- X Prescribe any one organization's programs/actions – dictate what you must work on
- X Be “final” or locked in forever – it will evolve and change
- X Create an unmanageable data collection burden for evaluation

Through a poster and sticky notes exercise, leaders and funders provided feedback on the strategy and 4P's goals and outcomes. See updated document based on the suggestions provided (Appendix 3).

In a follow up survey, participants were asked how relevant and useful the Water Leader Strategy would be in supporting the work of water leaders and funders, the results showed the strategy will:

- Put things in a provincial context in terms of what collectively is needed;
- Be a good synopsis of the Leaders' shared/overall objectives and priorities;
- Provide strategic context for funders/leaders that may be focusing on just 1-2 of the 4Ps;
- Helps funders understand the landscape, gaps, and opportunities for funding and support.

## Evolution of the Collaborative (Tim Morris, BC Water Funders Collaborative)

In 2009, the BC Water Funders Collaborative began as a network of funders that share a common interest in B.C. freshwater protection. Since inception, the Collaborative has sought to support coordination and strategic alignment among water funders. It provides a forum for sharing knowledge, peer-learning, and strengthening relationships between water funders and water leaders.



At the Fall 2018 Workshop, the Collaborative, in coordination with the water leaders' network, developed a set of recommended actions that funders could take, individually and collectively, to further strengthen the relationship between leaders and funders. Over the last year, the Collaborative has taken action on several of these recommendations including incorporating these recommendations into its multi-year strategic plan.

2018 Recommendations	Collaborative support?	Collaborative Action in 2019
Multi-year funding	Indirectly	
Core funding support for staff	Indirectly	
Aligned Reporting processes	Yes	Priority in Strategic Plan
Aligned Application processes	Yes	Priority in Strategic Plan
User-friendly online applications	Indirectly	
Up to date info on funder priorities & deadlines	Yes	New online resource on Collaborative website
Funding for strategic coordination with water groups	Indirectly	Funding support from members for Water Leaders Network
Joint Workshops & field trips	Yes	These meetings!
Other activities – bridging w gov't, recruitment of new funders	Yes	Gov't bridging through working groups/initiatives Growing the membership base an ongoing strategic priority

**Supporting Water Leaders capacity is a new strategy in the Collaborative's Strategic Plan**

## The Collaborative's 5-year Strategic Plan (Olivia Allen, BC Water Funders Collaborative)

Olivia Allen provided an update on the BC Water Funder's strategic planning process that took place in Summer 2019. The draft 5-year Strategic Plan is expected to be ratified by the Steering Committee in December 2019.

**Vision:** All waters in British Columbia are in good health and resilient by 2030.

**Mission:** The BC Water Funders Collaborative facilitates collaboration to advance healthy and resilient watersheds in BC.

<b>Strategy 1</b>	<b>Building Relationships &amp; Knowledge Sharing:</b> Relationships, networks, and knowledge-sharing are strengthened among funders, rights holders, stakeholders and decision-makers in the freshwater community.
<b>Strategy 2</b>	<b>Increasing Water Leader's Capacity:</b> The capacity of freshwater organizations is increased through funder alignment and collaboration.
<b>Strategy 3</b>	<b>Systems Thinking &amp; Addressing Gaps:</b> Funders are well informed about the BC freshwater system and networks. Gaps are identified and actions are undertaken to address them.
<b>Strategy 4</b>	<b>Assessing Collective Progress:</b> Funders enable collective monitoring and tracking of progress by the BC freshwater community.

**Key Developments with new Strategies:**

- The Collaborative is committed to expanding relationship-development and knowledge-sharing with the broader freshwater community.
- Supporting the leaders has become a core strategy of the Collaborative. Funders recognize that increasing the leaders' capacity is key to achieving our vision.
- Over the next two years the Collaborative will focus on aligning application and reporting processes to reduce the administrative demand on the leaders.
- The Collaborative will continue to identify and take action on gaps/needs in freshwater work and outline a gap-analysis method framework.
- The Collaborative is committed to working with the leaders to help assess the collective progress of the BC freshwater community. The Collaborative staff will work directly with a taskforce of leaders to establish a method for tracking progress (likely towards the leaders shared outcomes).

**Feedback/Input from Leaders:**

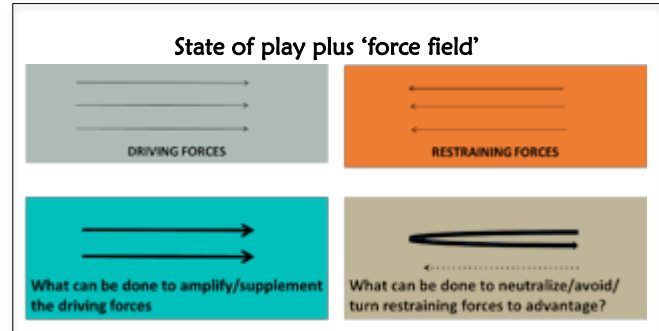
The Collaborative asked the leaders to provide feedback on sticky notes, the feedback was placed on a board into the appropriate quadrant for each strategy.

<p><b>Strategy 1</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prioritize building relationships with First Nations groups</li> <li>• Help build and bridge relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous leaders</li> <li>• Engage industry as funders</li> </ul>	<p><b>Strategy 2</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support leader skill development</li> <li>• Create a quick response fund</li> <li>• Flag upcoming deadlines in WL digest</li> <li>• Face-to-face dialogue about this between funders and leaders with measurable outcomes</li> </ul>
<p><b>Strategy 3</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop Systems Map who is who (gap)</li> <li>• Support engagement and organizing (gap)</li> <li>• Hold the public health aspect of water to account</li> <li>• Leaders workshop (working?) group to identify gaps</li> </ul>	<p><b>Strategy 4</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use the WL strategy</li> <li>• Invest multi-year in projects when timing works with public/government priorities/opportunities</li> <li>• A common place to report on/showcase water leader projects</li> <li>• Track how much \$ is reaching the ground</li> </ul>

## 4. Forcefield 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 government update
- Provincial water policy progress;
- Place-based & Indigenous-led approaches; and,
- Pooling water knowledge



Speakers highlighted key trends/changes within each 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.

### Government Update (Lisa Matthaus, Organizing for Change)

Lisa Matthaus spoke to trends and observations on government direction. Highlights include:

- The NDP government is expected to last their full term, which typically means they become more conservative (“play it safe”) with the decisions and resources later in the cycle, thinking ahead to the next election.
- New legislation on the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) is due to be released and it will influence other policy/laws. This new legislation creates an opportunity for leaders to guide the government on how to integrate UNDRIP across their work.
- There is an economic downturn happening, especially in forestry, so overall funds are being tightened.

#### Driving forces and opportunities on government relations:

- A broad range of voices advocating for water security fund, getting industry/companies on board would be beneficial
- The undeniable fact that water connects to many issues, forestry, land use planning and climate adaptation
- The policy-focused Water Leaders here are working to ensure they are prepared with guidance for an implementable water fund.
- Engaging with industry
- Talking to MLAs about water fund

#### Hindering forces in government relations currently include:

- The government feels they cannot “win” on the environment

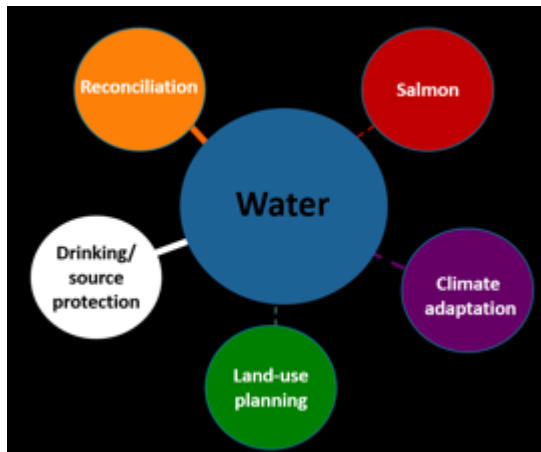


## Policy Update (Oliver Brandes, POLIS)

Oliver provided an overview of developments in WSA and related law/policy implementation, highlights include:

- Overall, WSA implementation has not advanced significantly; priorities so far seem to be focused on placer mining and livestock watering
- **Fish protection:** Section 88 (fish protection) orders were used recently for the first time in the Koksilah River
- **Groundwater licensing:** The government is now working to an extended deadline of 2022 for groundwater licensing.
- **Hullcar Aquifer:**
  - Highlights
    - Nitrate balance improving
    - Agricultural Environmental Management (AEM) Code of Practice (Regulation Feb 2019)
    - G2G relationship, working towards - Local (Hullcar) Advisory Board
  - Priorities still needing attention
    - Area based management plan
    - Local Monitoring/Information Management
    - Longer-term provincial level reforms
    - How the AEM is triggered
- **Modernized strategic land use planning:** The Province is jointly developing land use planning with Indigenous governments; there are nine prospective land use planning pilots in place as part of the initial 3-year commitment from the Province.

### Diving forces in Water Policy:



### Provincial Government Commitments:

- Modernize *land-use planning*
- Ensure *drinking water sources are protected*
- Fully adopting and implementing UNDRIP

## People (Danielle Paydli, Canadian Freshwater Alliance)

The main focus of public engagement efforts is the Code Blue Campaign, launching in November. Code Blue will focus on a common set of issues and mobilize broad public support for water conservation and management. The three key asks are:



- Make big industrial users pay a fair amount to use BC's water.
- Create a surge of good jobs by providing local people with the funding, training and authority to look after their water sources.
- Get tough on water wasters and polluters.

Code Blue will direct citizens to various campaigns that directly or indirectly relate to water health as they arise as “hot topics”, uniting many calls to action around water.



**Opportunities for engagement: become a champion of Code Blue, join Our Water BC, and talk to MLAs about a watershed security fund.**

## Indigenous-led Initiatives (Susi Porter-Bopp, First Nations Fisheries Council)

Crown commitments to reconciliation and UNDRIP legislation are driving forces for this work; however, government has been slow to implement Crown commitments to reconciliation efforts; staff are limited in capacity and resources.

G2G agreements continue to be developed and are evolving (e.g. using UNDRIP language around free prior and informed consent; referencing Indigenous laws). However, G2G agreements can also create barriers to collaboration.

Other initiatives include:

- FNFC is supporting the Watershed Security Fund by preparing recommendations and working with the Assembly of BC First Nations on letters of support.
- The First Nations Fisheries Council is supporting the development of new multi-nation roundtables in the Lower Fraser and in the Skeena.

### Restraining forces faced by Nations include:

- General reluctant acknowledgement of FN authority and jurisdiction by the Province
- Huge capacity gap with funding/resources
- In some cases, fragmented priorities within the Nations themselves

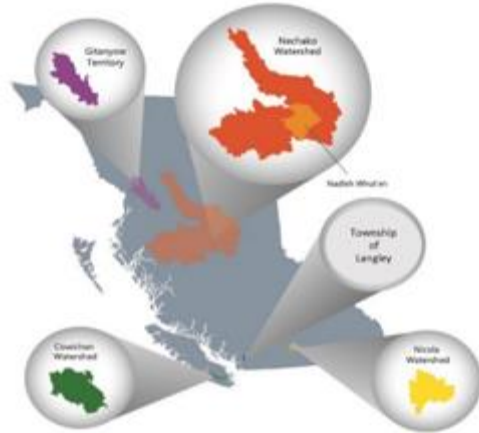
### Opportunities:

- Press for action and implementation in WSA engagement framework, which could completely change how the Province engages with First Nations
- Present an action plan for BC UNDRIP legislation
- Enable collaboration opportunities between FN or with these groups (Water Leader and Water Funders)

## Place-based Water Governance Opportunities (Tim Morris, BC Freshwater Legacy Initiative)

The G2G Nicola Field trip & following sessions were examples of place-based water governance.

Potential opportunities for Water Sustainability Plans are being explored in the Koksilah Watershed and the Township of Langley, while Indigenous-led water management continues to grow.



### Driving forces in this area include:

- Indigenous leadership and regional leaders from the province
- Alignment with government priorities in land use planning and reconciliation
- Provincial staff see the value of WSA to slow down problems and are starting to understand/use tools
- External support locally
- Funding/capacity support (e.g. the Nicola has been able to hire 4 staff to engage in the watershed work)

### Hindering forces include:

- Getting to scale, these are just one-off pilots, no province-wide program
- Limited provincial funding
- Limited local readiness
- Implementing governance is complicated and take relationships
- Transitions in staff and leadership from all sides
- Non-indigenous communities and stakeholders can feel excluded



**This work can be amplified by building on successful pilots - we need more Nicolas. Capacity building for First Nations, sustainable water funding, and finding opportunities to get water on the agenda.**

## Pooling Water Knowledge

### Provincial Update (Jennifer Archer)

In 2017, the Funders Collaborative developed a working group on pooling water knowledge and commissioned a province-wide inventory scan to better understand who is monitoring what and how/why. This work was initiated due to a lack of communication between various groups in water monitoring; the gaps were unknown; roles and responsibilities were unclear; and there was a lack of capacity to advance the work. Collaborative workshops over the past two years brought funders, Province and water monitoring champions together for knowledge-sharing and to provide recommendations for ongoing alignment and collaboration.



**The current opportunity is a partnership between funders and MOECCS to jointly resource shared WMR coordinator positions over the next 6 months. These joint coordinators, embedded within the Ministry, are tasked with developing a multi-year work plan to advance WMR work under the guidance of a joint steering committee.**

## National Update (Kat Hartwig, Living Lakes Canada)

Living Lakes Canada (LLC) conducted a baseline scan of citizen science (including indigenous engagement) across Canada. A roundtable brought indigenous and non-indigenous groups together for workshops in Ottawa to discuss opportunities and develop recommendations; this was compiled with case studies and final recommendations. There is a great opportunity to keep moving this work forward, but with organization and funder shifts, the project needs to determine who will be involved in the next steps and how it will be funded.

### The driving forces of this work include:

- Lack of data
- Multiple community groups willing
- Collaboration and communication for sharing best practices

### The work can be amplified by:

- Apply best practices from similar initiatives and using the Our Living Water outcomes framework
- Identifying and host a strategy team; generating a commitment to pursue ongoing steps outlined
- Determine a strategy for government relations

## 5. Closing

The meeting came to a close with inspiring words from Chief Harvey McLeod. The Chief spoke about how the development of the Nicola Valley Institute of Technology would not have been possible without the cooperation and collective efforts of the Nicola Chiefs many years ago. He reflected on the cross-community positive impacts that arose out of the development of the institution.

## Next Steps

- Participants provided feedback on the workshop through evaluation forms at the end of the meeting and an online survey sent on October 29th. The results will inform the design and delivery of future joint workshops. See Appendix 2: Water Leaders and Funders Feedback [Participants are still invited to provide feedback here.](#)
- Outcomes from the deliberations include identification of strategic opportunities and priorities, and update of [a Statement of Essential Elements for Freshwater Protection](#) that will be widely shared and presented to the provincial government.
- Both Water Funders and Water Leaders convened separately in the afternoon to reflect on outcomes of the joint session and refine respective next steps.
- Next gathering WL&F is currently planned for fall 2020 (TBC subject to Watersheds 2020 planning)

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### Water Leaders

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## Appendix 2: BC Water Leaders & Funders Workshop Feedback & Highlights

### Feedback

- Great update & useful information to gain a more holistic understanding of what is happening in the province, as well as common understanding of issues/strategies
- Great to build/strengthen relationships
- Right mix of bringing new people (leaders & funders)
- Great concept **Leaders + funders = better future**

### Recommendations/ Opportunities

- Agenda felt dense and a bit rushed / make sure presentations are concise
- More active discussion / small groups / Focused Q&A sessions, perhaps each of the 4Ps pick one issue to discuss in-depth
- Appetite for digging into watershed initiatives across the province, challenges and opportunities
- More introductions / icebreaker / involvement
- Updates brief & Reading package are very important but need to be sent at least a week of lead up
- New ideas to bring along new participants e.g. make an 'intro to WL package' that captures some of history, who's involved, what to expect at the meetings/sample agendas.

The field trip was a great opportunity to learn together, hear indigenous perspectives and stories, and deepen connections with First Nations. The networking and relationship-building offered excellent opportunities (both structured and unstructured) to talk with funders and get business done with colleagues. Deepening the content at the fieldtrip sites, hosting the classroom session at the beginning of the day to provide context, and more structured networking were suggested as improvements.

Funders unanimously expressed gratitude and highlighted that great value was gained during the field trip; they were also pleased FNFC roundtable participants were hosted at the same time. The large majority said they would want to do a field trip again. Funders enjoyed participating in the popcorn style updates at the start of the funders and leader session. The funders appreciated the framing of the forcefield activity, but some found the amount of information overwhelming and would have enjoyed more breakouts/interaction.

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