



PROGRAM ON WATER GOVERNANCE

e-newsletter

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New CWN Water Security Project

In 2008, the Canadian Water Network (CWN) awarded the UBC Program on Water Governance (PoWG) a four-year grant to lead a team of researchers from five Canadian universities on a project to improve water security in Canada. Water security is emerging as a paradigm for cumulative impacts assessment and watershed management and is a topic of great interest in Canada and world-wide. PoWG defines water security as: "sustainable access on a watershed basis to adequate quantities of water, of acceptable quality, for human and environmental uses". For more information, please visit the newly updated website: <http://www.watgovernance.ca/security/index.htm>

Water Governance Fact Sheets

A series of Fact Sheets on a wide variety of water governance topics are now available on the PoWG website. The topics include: Delegated Water Governance, Drinking Water, Groundwater Use Regulation, IPPs & Run-of-the-river Hydro in BC, Canada's Myth of Water Abundance, Public/Private Water, Water & Climate Change, Water Conservation, Water Pricing, Water Rights Across Canada, and Water Use & Consumption In Canada: <http://www.watgovernance.ca/factsheets/index.htm>

Upcoming Events

The Program will be hosting the first in a series of 'Water Security' workshops this fall. Targeted at water professionals and community groups, the workshop will provide an opportunity to debate water security issues and hear examples of cutting-edge strategies to improve water security from BC and beyond. Further details will be posted on the PoWG website in June.

Recent PoWG Activities

Linda Nowlan spoke at the **CWRA and Okanagan Basin Water Board "One Watershed – One Water" Conference**, in Kelowna, held October 21, 22 & 23, 2008. The conference focused on sustainable water management and highlighted ongoing research and future needs in the Okanagan "water laboratory". The international Okanagan basin is located within Canada's only desert – a compelling context for developing new policy, science and management practices. The Okanagan Sustainable Water Strategy was launched at the conference. Linda's presentation was on the topic of Delegating Water Governance: Issues and Challenges

in the BC Context, based on a paper commissioned by the BC government and Fraser Basin Council, and available on the PoWG website at www.watergovernance.ca The conference proceedings and papers are available at <http://www.obwb.ca/>.

Karen Bakker spoke at a conference on **Water Law Reform and Human Rights** in Geneva on January 22nd and 23rd, 2009. Hosted by the International Environmental Law Research Centre, the conference focused on a broad range of reforms occurring in the international water sector. The controversial debate over the human right to water – which is not currently recognized in any of the main UN Human Rights Conventions – was the focus of the meeting. Proponents argue that the right to water is as essential as already-recognized rights to life and housing. Opponents argue that a human right to water is technically difficult to implement, and could create a tension between environmental goals (such as water conservation) and human use. These issues, plus fears of implications for transboundary water and exports, are some of the reasons why observers speculate that the Canadian federal government systematically opposes the human right to water.

Gemma Dunn, PoWG Research Associate and Policy Outreach Coordinator, attended the **BC Ministry of Environment's State of BC's Water Indicator Workshop** in Victoria on November 26th, 2008. The purpose of the workshop is to provide input for the upcoming 2010 *State of B.C.'s Water Report*, which will present indicators on the quantity, quality, and use of BC's water as well as on the health of aquatic ecosystems. The report will also address key water management issues in the province such as climate change, effects of Mountain Pine Beetle, and growing demands by communities and industries. Gemma is working on water indicators in relation to the PoWG Water Security project.

Christina Cook, PoWG PH.D student attended the **CWN Student and Young Professional Infrastructure Workshop** in Montreal, QC October 26 – November 1, 2008. The assignment of the week was to consider how the Ice Storm of 1998 impacted the water system of Montreal. The group visited two of Montreal's seven drinking water treatment plants, the Châteaufort Reservoir and the Waste Water Treatment Plant, and the Ecole Polytechnique and Université de Montreal. The CWN, of which the Program is a member, regularly hosts workshops; for more information see www.cwn-rce.ca.

People

In January, Linda Nowlan left the PoWG to work as an independent consultant on a variety of projects on water law and policy. We wish Linda the very best with her new projects, and warmly acknowledge her contributions to the Program over the past two years. She can be contacted at lnowlan@shaw.ca.

Emma Norman has begun work with the PoWG as our Post-Doctoral Research Fellow. A graduate of the University of British Columbia, Emma has a wealth of expertise with a particular emphasis on groundwater and transboundary issues. Welcome, Emma!

Gemma Dunn (Research Associate and Policy Outreach Coordinator) remains the primary contact for the UBC Program on Water Governance. (gemma.dunn@ubc.ca)

The mission of the Program on Water Governance (PoWG) at the University of British Columbia, is to conduct basic research on water management, to engage the wider community in outreach and education on water issues and facilitate dialogue on water governance between universities, communities, government, NGO's and the private sector. The PoWG is co-hosted by the Department of Geography and the Institute of Resources, Environment and Sustainability at UBC.