



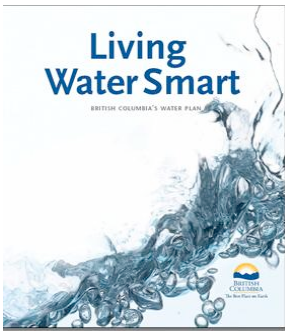
PROGRAM ON WATER GOVERNANCE

e-newsletter

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BC's New Water Plan and Program on Water Governance Commentary

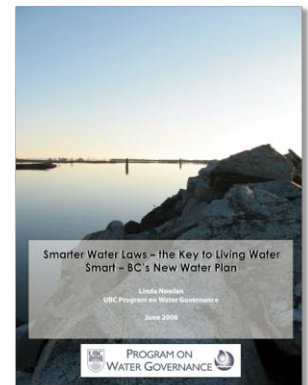


The BC government has released its long awaited water strategy, called Living Water Smart – the BC Water Plan (LWS). The Plan is online at www.livingwatersmart.ca

The initial reaction and commentary from the UBC Program on Water Governance was presented to BC Assistant Deputy Minister Jim Mattison at the Canadian Water Network retreat in Victoria on June 26th. The government is now developing its consultation plan.

Our commentary, titled “Smarter Water Laws – the Key to Living Water Smart, BC's New Water Plan” by Linda Nowlan is available here: <http://www.watgovernance.ca/Institute2/PDF/PoWGSmarterWaterLaws.pdf>

The LWS Plan emphasizes stream health, water conservation, climate change adaptation and integrated land and water planning, all welcome news. The most significant promises are to legislate environmental flows for rivers, significantly increase water efficiency, and regulate groundwater in designated areas. But the Plan omits critical details about implementation, time lines, and funding. Outstanding questions about ‘who does what?’ remain. The Plan will benefit from much more extensive, detailed and broad-based public consultation.



Workshop on Water Infrastructure

The Sustainable Water Infrastructure Management in Canada Workshop, an exploratory Workshop funded through financial contributions from Infrastructure Canada and the Canadian Water Network (CWN), was held at UBC's Peter Wall Institute on Monday May 5, 2008. A “**Draft Policy Report - Sustainable Water Infrastructure Management: Linking Governance and Efficiency in Canada**” was distributed prior to the workshop (online at http://www.watgovernance.ca/Workshop4/May5Workshop_DraftPolicyReport.pdf), the report will be revised based on feedback from the workshop participants.

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Water News

Alarming Numbers of Boil Water Advisories in Canada

Canada has an alarmingly high number of BC boil water advisories in effect across the country, as reported in an investigative report published in the Canadian Medical Association Journal this spring. As of March 31, 2008 there were 1766 such orders operating in Canada. BC ranked second in the country for the number of boil-water advisories, with 530 orders in effect, second only to Ontario at 679. What is even more disturbing is that these numbers excluded an additional 93 boil-water advisories in First Nations communities. This serious public health issue needs more attention. As the CMAJ review noted: "Advisories are intended to be a precautionary measure in the public health tool kit, but given that some have been in place for at least 5 years, they are apparently being used as a band-aid substitute for treatment."

The full report, "Investigative report: 1766 boil-water advisories now in place across Canada" by Laura Eggertson, is available online at www.cmaj.ca/cgi/reprint/178/10/1261.

First Nations Lawsuit in Alberta Challenges Government Approved Water Plan

Aboriginal water rights are an undecided and significant issue that will affect water decisions across Canada. In a lawsuit with implications for BC, two aboriginal communities in Alberta are challenging the government's decision to limit new water takings from rivers and lakes in southern Alberta. The Tsuu T'ina Nation southwest of Calgary and the Samson Cree Nation in Hobbema north of Red Deer argue that they were not adequately consulted about the water management plan, that it infringes their treaty hunting and fishing rights, and that it will not protect the environment.

<http://www.enviroline.ca/volume-17/issue-5-6/environmental-law-briefs-4.html>