

B.C. WATER FUNDERS MEETING

- Lunch 'n Learn Webinar Series -

#2: PEOPLE



Growing a Water Movement: Case Studies from the Grassroots

November 14, 2013

12:00 – 1:00pm PST

Weblink: <http://polis.adobeconnect.com/p9oufdbls2b/>

Password: H2OFunders1

Introduction

There is an emerging water movement in B.C. comprised of literally hundreds of grassroots and watershed-based organizations working on everything from stream restoration to political advocacy. These groups are locally driven and embedded within their own communities. They employ creative and innovative approaches to engaging people in taking action to protect their home waters. This webinar presents some of the leading lights of grassroots action for freshwater protection and offers an opportunity for funders to hear from front-line perspectives on what is needed to support the emerging BC water movement.

Presentations



SHANNON MCPHAIL

Skeena Watershed Conservation Coalition (Sacred Headwaters)

Background: Shannon and her husband come from the pipeline industry as pipeline welders and it was in the process of trying to get work with Shell that they became aware of the threat to the region. Not the “usual suspects” so were able to connect with local community in a different way. The Skeena Watershed Conservation Coalition was created in response to Shell’s proposal to drilling for coal bed methane in the Sacred Headwaters.

Key Elements:

- Local watershed-based, community driven response based upon relationship of people to place and people to people.
- Not grassroots but “deep roots”. Founders descended from 6 generations of residents in the region with many trade industry and First Nations relationships.
- Three-pronged approach: environment, community, economy. Each is interrelated and an impact upon one requires a consideration of how they will impact the others.
- Relationship with First Nations is critical as all land use decisions are made by First Nations.

- Have to meet people where you find them. The Gitksan have major social issues to contend with including 67% rate of fetal alcohol syndrome and the highest teen suicide rate. Social and economic issues must be addressed when considering environmental issues.
- Must address the economic opportunities. Cannot protect any place unless we can demonstrate that there is an economic solution in doing so. Emphasis on the wild salmon economy not the fossil fuel economy.
- “Skeena immune response” – when something threatens us, we organize as a watershed

Past Projects:

- Spirit of the Skeena Swim 2009 – Ally Howard swam the Skeena from headwaters to Pacific Ocean - connecting people throughout the entire watershed
- Youth on Water & Women on Water – white water rafting with training from First Nations elders, fisheries biologists, and conservationists.
- Trapper’s Paradise – established trapping line in region and 56 km trail and cabin all of which help to connect people to the land.
- 10,000 Salmon Project engaging youth to create salmon art. It became the largest collection of children’s art in the province.

Current Focus:

- Anti-LNG campaign – playing catch up to imminent threat.
- Skeena Energy Solutions – what kind of development can we say yes to?
- Skeena Ecosystem Valuation – identify value of leaving watershed intact.
- Skeena Project 2050 which will engage and consult with every person in the watershed.
- Sacred Headwaters Protected Area – by end of 2014.



Heather Leschied

Lake Windermere Ambassadors (Lake Windermere, Columbia Valley)

Background: Heather works with Wildsight and Living Lakes Canada. Lake Windermere sits at the headwaters of the Columbia River and provides drinking water for local community as well as important salmon and wildlife habitat. Threats from shoreline development, heavy recreational use and non-point source pollution issues were degrading lake. In 2005, Wildsight launched the Lake Windermere Project with focus on partnership, science, stewardship and data collection.

Key Elements:

- “Healthy water for healthy communities” – linking lake health to community health.
- Engagement and collaborations with full spectrum of community including First Nations, Chamber of Commerce, business community and international allies.
- Scientific approach – in depth multi-year water quality monitoring & biological inventories and aquatic surveys.
- Established water stewardship ethic that all Canadians can be proud of based on community-based citizen science. Trained volunteers in water monitoring, hosted basin-wide public events to celebrate water and educating children and water about healthy watersheds.

Past Projects:

- Lake Management Plan: locally collected data provided framework for the Lake Management Plan which was used to update the Province's water quality objectives for the lake and also federally through the Shoreline Management Guidelines.
- Lake Windermere Ambassadors was formed to continue water monitoring and stewardship and implement the Lake Management Plan. It includes volunteers and representatives from business, gov't, First Nations, recreation, 2nd homeowners, local residents, youth and NGOs.
- Experience has given Wildsight the knowledge and experience to launch Living Lakes Canada to share their knowledge with other local communities across Canada
- Sister Lake Partnership with Lake Windermere, UK

Current Focus:

- Ambassadors have been appointed by local and provincial government as the "Lake Management Plan Implementation Committee". In this role, they continue to deliver educational programs, restoration initiatives, watershed tours, host watershed governance dialogue and coordinate with gov't officials and review referrals for development and crown land tenure applications on the foreshore.
 - Viewed as a stepping stone to a collaborative sub-watershed governance model of the Lake Windermere watershed to align with efforts across the Columbia Basin.
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**Matt Price**

One Cowichan (Cowichan Valley, Vancouver Island)

Background: Matt is a volunteer director of One Cowichan - a new citizen group in the Cowichan Valley which was formed out of a drought crisis related to the Cowichan River two summers ago which was caused by poor centralized decision-making by gov't. Matt's day job is working to foster more grassroots organizing across Canada and writes about concepts such as pyramid of engagement, snowflake model, and distributed organizing work (<http://engagement-organizing.org/>). Work at One Cowichan forces him to walk the walk and merge theory with practice.

Key Elements:

- Building relationships by talking to people face to face: door-to-door canvassing of signatures, table at events,
- Stewarding relationships through technology - use sophisticated integrated database and social media system (ie NationBuilder) which is affordable to grassroots (\$20/month) which maps your people for you.
- Metrics: 4000 in database, 1850 emails, 1600 Facebook and spent \$20K to get to those numbers
- Won the river battle – Province has agreed to store more water in subsequent years and securing control over release of water in future.

Current Focus:

- Expand leadership circle by pushing people up the pyramid level through organizing training – (Marshall Ganz style)
 - Proposed municipal referendum in 2017 regarding local control of waters.
 - Can you achieve critical mass in a small town? Trying to be a catch-all citizen's group rather than a single issue group so that they can have a broader base and be more effective on single issues as they arise.
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Sheila Muxlow

The WaterWealth Project (Fraser Valley)

Background: Shiela is a 3rd generation resident of Chilliwack and Campaign Director of this very new group launched in December 2012. The WaterWealth Project was created to help profile Water Act in provincial election with an initial 6 month timeline and has continued on.

Key Elements:

- Community peer-to-peer engagement around water to build authentic relationships.
- Hired locally from different age groups and communities and then trained up in order to access a foundation of relationships in region.
- Developed relationship with Sto:lo Nation and engaged an elder advisor from inception.
- Focus on water is intended to unite people – across political and cultural and social spectrum.
- Amplifying sense of pride about water.

Past Projects:

- Swag options: coasters for pubs, magnets as give-aways.
- Open-house for introductions with child care and food to keep it inclusive.
- Story-mapping: interactive map where you can access peoples stories about freshwater.
- Discussions in public spaces.
- Promoting the Declaration on Water - focus on the positive, canvassing for signatures, emerged from story-mapping, canvassing for signatures.
- Fun Political Theatre – volunteers donned blue lycra suits to “make water visible”. Fun for the volunteers, received well by community and media. Featured in videos created for Water Wealth Project.
- Able to provide support regarding Nestle water issue and local creek issues.

Current Focus:

- Election was not as hoped but have developed positive relationships with those elected.
- Continue to build on foundation of relationships to support local initiatives on water.

Question & Answer Period

Question 1: Matt & Heather - we heard in yesterday's webinar about the movement towards local watershed governance and you both touched on this in your presentation. Can you expand a bit on how you view your relationship as a grassroots organization with those pushing for local watershed governance (ie Cowichan Water Board and Columbia River watershed governance initiative)? How do you see the connection between grassroots activity and this institutional change that is going to happen in BC?

Matt: I got involved rather reluctantly and it was actually one of the Watershed Board people who pulled me in and what they said is that "we have the best plans in the world but they are all sitting on a shelf and so how do we actually make them come alive and mobilize people around them". I think it is hard for a governance entity to do that because they play a role in the ecosystem which is different than grassroots groups who can be a little more edgy in terms of pushing both in the media and politicians and so forth. We complement each other quite well in terms of providing the leverage for that type of stuff to move ahead. Some people call that the 'inside-outside' strategy but in a small town everyone really knows each other so it can be a lot more seamless than it can be in bigger cities. That's been our role – how do we make this come alive and how do you provide the leverage to make it happen.

Heather: I would say something very similar to what Matt has expressed. In the Columbia Basin, this watershed is massive and we need sub-watershed approaches like the Lake Windermere Ambassadors, and the Elk River Alliance to meet with people on the ground. We think the Lake Windermere Ambassadors and those local efforts help to ensure that higher-level, horizontal-policy, academic thinking is vertically integrated to meet with our grassroots initiatives halfway. That's how we see the Lake Windermere Ambassadors as being nested within this bigger Columbia Basin watershed approach. We had hosted a big watershed wide symposium at the end of September and the intent there was to bring the level of water literacy up across all sectors so that we could have this common vision and a common language that we could all rally behind so that we could talk about policy in a language that was implementable and palatable for grassroots organizations. I think that also came out in the State of the Water report that was referenced earlier.

Question 2: Shannon and Sheila – one of the suggestions in the State of the Water Movement report was that there is an emerging water movement but that it hasn't yet been coalesced in British Columbia. Do you think there is a possibility of a more visible water movement in BC of connecting grassroots to create a more visible movement or are most of these groups going to stay focused locally?

Shannon: I have been working with a person in New Brunswick who wants to start a national movement on fracking and the main motivation to do that is because of the impact fracking has on water. We already have this opportunity with fracking and the LNG industry in BC. We don't need to create a whole new type of hysteria or campaign because it is already there. Fracking is something that people can relate to - they understand its implications to water and because of those implications

people are standing up against the industry and as a result fracking is being banned in several countries around the world. As I said in my presentation - water connects us but it is not something that we necessarily relate to. If we do it from the full aspect of just water, I think we'd be losing out. So we need to not create what is already there and I think that is fracking and I think the best way to do that is to transform the issues into water issues. In 12 months, an intense education and outreach campaign demonstrates that the impact on freshwater will actually connect people to water. It is sort of the underlying message that people will receive. People understand the value of our watershed because it supports our wild salmon and wild salmon supports our economy. We have to meet people where they are at.

Sheila: I definitely agree with Shannon. Water is a way to help amplify some of the concerns around those issues. I would also add that the water movement has the potential to emerge differently and more effectively than say the climate change movement. Climate change is something that has been brought up so many times but it has also been really polarized as an issue. We can talk about water across the board and it is something that people can easily relate to as a source of pride, particularly in Canada. I do think there is room there to speak to water in a way that elicits a sense of pride and connection to people as something that is essential to our identity here in Canada and then move it into challenging or connecting into some of those long standing issues like fracking, like oil sands, like hydro projects – make a connection for people to be critical of those industries in a way that ensures that we are protecting our water and valuing it in a way that it deserves.

Question 3: This is a room of funders and funders would be very interested in your perspective around supporting grassroots in BC. So if foundations do have an interest in supporting some of this great work happening on the ground – where do you see the most effective role for foundations to do that? How can they best help do that given the many groups out there doing amazing work? How can funders leverage their own funds to the greatest impact?

Heather: A couple of thoughts. Something that we've been really thrilled with is the way that the funders have taken a more active role in building relationships amongst grantees. For example, the Real Estate Foundation helped bring together the Lake Windermere Ambassadors and the Cowichan Watershed Board. They identified this opportunity where we can learn from each other and we may not have had that connection otherwise. So we are very grateful that foundations are playing more of an active role in what they are funding. Also I think that leveraging support through the funding communities could work more closely together and ensure that what they are supporting is leading to change. They can also be creative in broadening the base of water funders in the province and pulling in other sectors like business and industry to help support water programs. Unilever did that for us. They brought in a firm for national PR to help us re-brand. So that brought in a non-traditional funder that helped us back in 2003 when we became Wildsight. Those are two ideas on how foundations can think outside of traditional scope.

Shannon: Getting people on the land is the single most effective way to get people to rally around water and that comes from people doing programs that make that possible. We have people with natural deficit disorder – people not connecting with their natural environment and as a result they don't care.

All the stats all over Canada – those things are plummeting - people are not watching nature shows, they are not experiencing nature and as a result they are not connected and they couldn't care less about environmental campaigns and there are so many of them. So without that connection - of people being connected to the natural landscape – they are not going to vote or care much about the politics around them.

Matt: People who know me know probably what I am going to say. My advice is to invest in overcoming our Canadian-ness. Our Canadian-ness makes us shy and keeps us stuck in our office and on social media instead of talking to people. To my mind – and I will tie in to Carolyn's question as well regarding the future of funding – but the biggest impact is actually investing in people who are going to be organizers out there and talking to other people. It doesn't come naturally to us as Canadians but it is super effective when it is done – investing in the organizers. Over time – organizers are connecting to new people and new relationships – what you are doing is building your donor base as well. People will donate to you \$5, \$10 at a time a local level once you generate enough contact, enough relationships, enough history with people. That's really where the future of funding lies and the organizing model is in your community itself.

Sheila: Definitely echo what Matt said there – definitely investing in the organizers on the ground is a really crucial way to ensure that people can participate in programs that get them out on the land and also to keep up a level of morale to keep engaged on the issue. I can't express more strongly how important it is to invest in people to learn organizing strategies, to be confident talking about these issues in a good way, that brings people in and not just preaching to the choir. Funding to support grassroots fundraising - we are trying to do that with WaterWealth and it is just slowly coming together. We just had a wine and cheese and fundraising dinner and slowly some funds are coming in. Definitely it is not enough to keep us at the standard that we want to keep working at so maybe funders investing in groups for that long haul to help them build their funding approach within a couple of year period of funding would be brilliant.

Question 4: Matt did address Carolyn's question but I did want to give the other three an opportunity to pick up on that one. How do you predict funding or ideas for funding will change for you in the next 2 to 5 years?

Sheila: We are looking to be more creative with funding. One thing that we are looking at is how we look at bigger picture needs. It is challenging when we are being pulled into small grants to support our work. What we are looking for in the next two years and longer term is multi-year support. I know that's a common theme. I just want to recognize that type of support is really important but also not to lose those small funding opportunities. We want to keep the biodiversity of funding alive in BC because those smaller funding opportunities really help get local initiatives off the ground.

Shannon: About 60% of my time, and my associate's time, is spent fundraising and writing grants. We are no different than any other organization. We have a diverse group of funders. Our biggest funder will be leaving at the end of next year. We are looking at Matt Price's model in the Skeena 2050 project – trying to source funding from our watershed. Talking to people on their doorstep and talking to

people about the issues that are important to them and essentially putting that into our database. We want to talk to our entire region in a way that stretches beyond what we are doing now. The hard part with the foundational perspective is the amount of time and energy that it takes in the granting process. In the end we benefit greatly from it. However, each foundation has a different process, different template, different reporting structure and it would be incredible and I get goosebumps thinking about the possibility of having that process not necessarily streamlined but having them be similar between foundations. When we talk about the Sacred Headwaters campaign – it can essentially be one proposal instead of 10 different proposals. I don't know if that is a possibility. We have become a bureaucratic organization as we've grown and large part of that bureaucracy is in the grant making process. If there was some way we could streamline that process that would be great.

Appendix A

Attendees

Host & Resource Guests:

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| • Tim Morris | Morris Consulting |
| • Laura Brandes | Consultant |
| • Jennifer Archer | Archer Consulting |

Presenters:

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| • Shannon McPhail | Skeena Watershed Conservation Coalition (Sacred Headwaters) |
| • Heather Leschied | Lake Windermere Amabassadors (Lake Windermere, Columbia Valley) |
| • Matt Price | One Cowichan (Cowichan Valley, Vancouver Island) |
| • Sheila Muxlow | The WaterWealth Project (Fraser Valley) |

Present:

- | | |
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| • Trina Prior | Vancouver Foundation |
| • Mark Gifford | Vancouver Foundation |
| • Leanne Sexmith | Real Estate Foundation BC |
| • Nick Davies | Real Estate Foundation BC |
| • David Hendrickson | Real Estate Foundation BC |
| • Jim Shinkewski | Pacific Salmon Foundation |
| • Carolyn Beaty | Sitka Foundation |
| • Lisa Myers | Patagonia |