



Our Water BC

*Advancing implementation of BC's Water Sustainability Act
through a province-wide strategic engagement initiative.*

Campaign Strategy

Fall 2017 – Fall 2019

Prepared by:

Canadian Freshwater Alliance, a project on the Tides Canada shared platform.





Introduction - Why WSA? Why Now?

The creation of the *Water Sustainability Act* was a significant step in the right direction for improving the management, use, and governance of British Columbia's freshwater and for protecting the ecosystems and communities that our shared waters support. However, many critical components of the *Water Sustainability Act* have yet to be developed and implemented. With a new government coming to power in Victoria, we have an unprecedented opportunity for communities across the province to advance improvements on the way water is managed. For this to be successful, we need to ensure local community groups have the tools and resources they need to come together, organize and show leadership.

When communities are informed and given the opportunity to be a part of the

dialogue, we have seen first hand how decisions affecting local water health can be improved. This was demonstrated during the development of the *Water Sustainability Act*, when community groups, organizations and individuals were organized to provide comments and input throughout the process, resulting in a stronger and more robust Act.

A more recent example was in 2015 when hundreds of thousands of people stood up for freshwater in BC, calling for a stop on large industrial users extracting water for little cost. This public response resulted in the past B.C. government committing to review the water rental structure.

During the 2017 provincial election, *Our Water BC* started a movement of British

Columbians who value their home waters and acted to see them protected. Thousands from over 75 communities took action, by pledging to vote for water, sending their local candidates and MLA a letter detailing their water priorities, or attended a water all candidates meeting to ensure that BC's next government implements and enforces robust rules to protect our shared waters. Nearly 1000 British Columbians showed up to community meetings to learn about the water challenges facing their communities, express their concerns and desires regarding water management, hear about commitments candidates have made, and about how the *Water Sustainability Act* could offer world class legal protections for BC's waters.

With a newly elected government in British Columbia, there is a critical window to advance implementation of the *Water Sustainability Act*. The regulatory developments necessary do not require a vote in the legislature, providing a more strategic opportunity for government to meet our expectations.

British Columbians are aware of the importance of freshwater and are conscious that this precious resource is not being managed effectively. We can build and leverage capacity on the

Expectations for WSA Implementation

- Water for nature (i.e., environmental flow needs) must be protected in regulation;
- Meaningful co-governance with First Nations, with involvement for local communities in decision-making that affects their waters, beginning with the commencement of three regional water sustainability plans by 2018;
- Rigorous and transparent monitoring of water quality and quantity, beginning with a significant funding commitment in Budget 2018; and
- Adequate funding for implementation, including action on promised plans to review commercial water use pricing.

ground in local areas to help make sure action to advance freshwater health happen.

The agreement between British Columbia's NDP and Green Parties, including mandate letters to ministers address the actions we're calling for: watershed planning; clean drinking water; working with First Nations and communities to modernize land use planning and sustainably manage B.C.'s ecosystems, rivers, lakes, watersheds; and ensuring high volume water users pay appropriate rates. This is a critical moment for the freshwater community to come together with a unified and strategic message across the province on the implementation of the *Water Sustainability Act*.



Opportunities for success

The *Our Water BC theory of change* for advancing progress on Water Sustainability Act implementation is:

If we organize and advance a public engagement initiative on the need to advance freshwater protection in key geographic areas, then robust regulations for the Water Sustainability Act will ensue. We believe this will happen because local voices across the province will be united and engaged in the decisions impacting their home waters and the government of BC wants to govern for the best of all British Columbians.

To that end, a locally implemented engagement initiative in key geographic regions of the province will heighten the priority and discussion on the need to advance efforts in freshwater protection.

Locally Driven

Partnered water groups and organizations will be primary agents of change and program delivery at the local level and will themselves guide the type of support they need from the central campaign. A subset of these groups have been active in program development and have been informing the early phases of design and testing. All groups who join the initiative will be involved in project review, campaign adaptation and evaluation.

Lack of resources and capacity is the most common challenge we hear from smaller groups and organizations in seeing the actions and change needed to advance community engagement on their issues. The three opportunities to address the core capacity challenges, were identified during the strategic planning session with key campaign

partners and funders when we systematically indicated core gaps facing groups on the ground. These gaps were:

- **Strategic communications:** provide strategic communications support linking local and regional issues to implementation of the provincial *Water Sustainability Act*, regionally specific literature and messaging guides, message testing for digital and ground engagement.
- **Local reconnaissance and relationship building:** Strengthening relationships in key areas where our networks are not currently strong, identifying community leaders and organizations taking a lead on local water challenges, introducing campaign and opportunities for coordination.
- **Organizing and capacity building:** offer hands-on support, resources, and tools to enable groups to advance the knowledge, and resources they need to engage their communities effectively.

Key Geographic Areas

In an effort to maximize our opportunities for implementation over the next two years, we have identified key geographic areas across the

province where we believe we can have the biggest impact. We have identified three criteria an area must meet in order for us to begin organizing on the ground. Our three criteria are:

- **Challenge:** Critical local water challenge currently impacting the community that can be linked to the WSA in some manner.
- **Strategic Value:** Established water champions with the political will to see the WSA implemented; political instability in a riding due to a tight margin of victory; or a key decision maker ie: cabinet members riding.
- **Capacity:** Well established network (ie. groups) already developed in a region, or the potential for capacity growth to be rolled out through reconnaissance.

Based on this criteria, we have identified 8-key geographic areas where program implementation can be advanced: 2 regions where we believe readiness is immediate, 2 where short-term reconnaissance can lead to readiness over the first 4 to 6-months, 3 where longer-term reconnaissance is anticipated over the first year of the program and 1 where local water priorities are strong and advancing and maintaining ongoing relations and connections will facilitate connection to provincial organizing efforts. We recognise that we will need to leave

space to be flexible and nimble as opportunities may present themselves in regions not currently identified. Table 1

below describes the key geographic areas, alongside this criteria and the strategic priority for each region.

Strategic Priorities
Campaign ready (next 6 months): Start building capacity with local groups and organizations on the ground immediately who we have strong and established relationships with and a firm understanding of the local water challenges.
Short term reconnaissance: Begin reconnaissance over the Fall and Winter building and deepening relationships with local groups and organizations, identifying community leaders, and local water challenges.
Long term reconnaissance: These are areas we believe could be instrumental to the success of the initiative but where engagement on the WSA file over the years has not been active. This work will begin through the Fall and Winter of 2018 building relationships with local groups and organizations, identifying community leaders, and local water challenges.
Supporting connections: Areas who have well established groups who may need support and reinforcement from the provincial campaign to advance local and provincial water priorities.

Table 1: Rationale for key geographic areas

Geographic Area	Challenge	Strategic Value	Capacity
Strategic Priority - Campaign Ready			
Comox Valley	Water Quality and Local Control	Critical ridings which have historically been significant during elections for all political parties.	Actively engaged citizen base and existing organizing capacity amongst water groups already established on the ground.
Lower Mainland (Coquitlam, Chilliwack, Maple Ridge, Mission)	Environmental Flows, Pricing, Water Quality, Flood control and habitat connectivity	Presence of key decision makers and well established community water roundtable and heart of water pricing review champions.	Largest population in BC to engage, Engaged organizations working on water challenges.

Strategic Priority - Reconnaissance Short-term			
Okanagan	Environmental Flows, Local Control, Ground Water	Opportunity for Okanagan Basin Water Board to advance implementation on key regulations.	Many small groups working on local issues, but reconnaissance will be required to identify leaders and interest in forming an organization committed to advancing overall accountability in the region.
North West	Environmental Flows, Local Control, Cumulative Effects (LNG, pipelines Site C, tankers, mining, forestry)	Presence of key decision makers and political champions. Main Minister responsible for critical implementation and connection to WSA issues on the ground.	Many engaged groups and organizations on the ground- particularly engaged on threats to wild salmon. Substantial discussion is required with groups in the region to identify how local priorities could be supported through various aspects of WSA implementation (e.g. improved watershed governance to enhance local control).
Strategic Priority - Reconnaissance Long-term			
Nechako	Mining, logging, Environmental Flows	Well established and connected water roundtable with an opportunity to be leaders in local governance and decision making.	Nechako Watershed Roundtable has strong voice and relationships in the area.
Nicola	Drought, Lack of water supply/storage, resource development, agriculture	To be determined through Reconnaissance	Many small groups working on local issues, but reconnaissance will be required to identify leaders and interest in forming an organization committed to advancing overall accountability in the region.
Kootenays	Severe Flooding, Water Use, Mining, Environmental Flows		Many small groups working on local issues, but reconnaissance will be required to identify leaders and interest in forming an organization committed to advancing overall accountability in the region.
Strategic Priority - Supporting Connections			
Cowichan	Local Control, Environmental Flows	Potential of Sustainable Funding Mechanism being put into a referendum during the municipal election. Could be essential for advancing local governance responsibilities.	Well established water champions across the region.



Action Plan

Working alongside local community water groups and organizations we will facilitate community conversations with diverse stakeholders, drive action on community-based water priorities, and support face to face community organizing to champion water decision-making that puts local values at the forefront.

We will work with groups to support and provide the tools needed to build a cohesive province wide water campaign that is driven by local priorities with specific focus on building civic engagement through a public water dialogue.

For a detailed breakdown of the project theory of change, outcomes and associated activities see appendix A.

Table 2: Short term Timeline of Activities

Legend		
Regional Organizing		
Provincial Organizing		
Actions	Fall 2017	Winter 2018
Message testing and polling in key geographic areas		
Development of key communication resources		
Hire Strategic Communications Specialist		
Ministerial meetings		
Pricing Review Launch		

Coordinate MLA Meetings		
Short Term Reconnaissance in key regions		
Environmental Flow Launch		
Working Together Indigenous water dialogue		
Build engagement tools for campaign partners		
Grow OWBC network of partner organizations		
Campaign training		
Campaign Partner Check-In		
Campaign Onboarding		
Volunteer recruitment and engagement		
Issue based community outreach and engagement		
Meetings with City Councillors		

Table 3: Long-term Timelines of Activities

Actions	Spring 2018	Summer 2018	Fall 2018	Winter 2019	Spring 2019	Summer 2019	Fall 2019
	Regional Organizing		Provincial Organizing				
Message testing and polling in key geographic areas							
Development of key communication resources							
Ministerial meetings							
Pricing Review Launch							
Coordinate MLA Meetings							
Public Event Outreach							
Campaign Peer Learning							
Grow OWBC network of partner organizations							
Campaign training							
Campaign Partner Check-In							
Identify campaign partners for organizing funding							

Community Water Dialogues	Red	Red	Red	White	Red	Red	Red
Campaign Onboarding	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	White
Outreach Training (outreach and volunteer engagement)	Green	Green	White	Green	Green	White	White
Volunteer recruitment and engagement	Red						
Meetings with City Councillors	Red	Red	White	White	White	White	White
Issue based community outreach and engagement	Red						
Volunteer recruitment and engagement (organizing for Municipal election)	White	Red	White	White	White	White	White
Meetings with City Councillors	White	Red	White	White	White	White	White
Community Water Dialogues	Red	Red	Red	White	Red	Red	White
Engagement tools and Key communication guides for municipal election	White	White	Green	White	White	White	White
Organize in lead up to BC Municipal Election	White	Red	White	White	White	White	White
Mobilize around BC Municipal Election	White	White	Red	White	White	White	White
Analyse Municipal success	White	White	White	Green	White	White	White



Team and Partners

Canadian Freshwater Alliance

- Lindsay Telfer - National Director: Provides overall strategic direction. Leads in grant and budget management, fundraising initiatives and evaluation oversight. (1 day / week)
- Coree Tull - National Organizing Director: Lead Our Water BC campaign implementation, strategic development and oversight, budgeting, fundraising activities and Government Relations. Supports events, communications and other project implementation needs. (2-4 days / week)
- Christine Mettler - Special Projects and Communications Lead. Supports campaign communications and digital media strategies. (1 day / week)

Dedicated Our Water BC program staff via Canadian Freshwater Alliance

- BC Organizer. Oversees regional program implementation and supporting local organizing. (4 days / week)
- BC Strategic Communications Lead: Develop and lead localized campaign communications, messaging and resources (4 days / week)

Provincial Partners

- Watershed Watch Salmon Society: We have a long standing partnership with WWSS and are increasingly building a closer partnership over the past 7 months through Our Water BC election campaign and summer outreach. Our close working relationship means communication is frequent and transparent. Aaron Hill, Executive Director, has lent additional capacity to the project by way of on the ground organizing support and outreach.

- Fraser Riverkeeper: We established a working partnership this year, with FRK being instrumental in supporting our summer outreach efforts. We are increasingly defining our niche areas support to greater effect.
- Waterwealth Project: We have worked with WWP for many years now and have a strong relationship with commitments to continue to advance our collective efforts
- Organizing For Change: Instrumental in supporting the project with sound policy analysis and advice.
- Outdoor Recreation Council of BC: We have established a working partnership this year with Mark Angelo- ORCBC River Chair, supporting engagement of ORCBC membership during OWBC provincial campaign
- Polis Project on Ecological Governance: Support the project with sound policy analysis and advice.

Local Partners

- Comox Valley Land Trust and Conservation Partnership
- Coquitlam River Watershed Roundtable
- Save Hullcar Aquifer Team
- Rivershed Society of BC



Budget

Our Water BC - Central Campaign Hub

Draft Budget - September 2017 to August 2018

Summary

		Full Capacity	Working Capacity
Campaign Team	Full capacity includes 3.0 FTEs and 40k support to project partners in SGAs.	\$178,250.00	\$129,000.00
Strategic communications	Campaign messaging, materials, public opinion research.	\$70,125.00	\$29,000.00
Travel	To support staff and partner travel throughout region.	\$16,000.00	\$10,000.00
Events	Campaign events in SGAs	\$20,000.00	\$10,000.00
Administration	12.5% of campaign revenues	\$40,625.00	\$25,000.00
		\$325,000.00	\$203,000.00

*This budget represents a full year of program costs. Campaign expenses are not expected to vary tremendously from year-to-year, with one exception. Strategic communications activities such as polling and public opinion research are only anticipated as a one-time expense over the two year forecast making year two expenses less than year one.

APPENDIX A - Detailed Project Theory of Change

Goal: High-bar implementation of the <i>Water Sustainability Act</i> , with particular emphasis on protection of water for people and nature and respect for First Nations Title & Rights		
Conditions precedent: ALL of these conditions must be met in order to achieve our goal:		
1. Meaningful co-governance with First Nations, with involvement for local communities in decision-making that affects their waters, with a short term outcome being three Water Sustainability Plans underway by 2018;		
2. A centralized province wide water campaign with distributed organizing driven by local on the ground groups One common freshwater narrative with key messaging on strategic local issues. Local engagement organizing continues to demonstrate and articulate public pressure for robust implementation of the WSA;		
3. Water for nature (i.e., environmental flow needs) must be protected by regulation; and		
4. Adequate funding in the budget for WSA implementation, including rigorous and transparent monitoring of water quality and quantity, action on promised plans to review commercial water use pricing.		
Our Water BC Organizing Theory of Change:		
<i>If we organize and advance a public engagement initiative on the need to advance freshwater protection in key geographic areas, then robust regulations for the Water Sustainability Act will ensue. We believe this will happen because local voices across the province will be united and engaged in the decisions impacting their home waters and the government of BC wants to govern for the best of all British Columbians.</i>		
Actions: what will it take to achieve the condition stated above		
Activity	Timeline	Measures of Success
Objective # 1: Province wide water campaign calling for robust and resourced implementation of the <i>Water Sustainability Act</i>		
Activity #1: Advance organizing and mobilization opportunities across BC by hiring a provincial organizer to drive strategic engagement opportunities	Fall 2017	Pre-developed uniquely branded digital engagement tools with multi-channel opportunities (joint campaign sites with petitions, letter to editor, e-mail to elected officials) for each local organization. Coordinated letter writing campaign for traditional media with a minimum of 9 letters to the editor or media stories (approx 1 quarterly for each key geographic area)

Activity #2 Support peer to peer learning and organizing training	Ongoing	9 Quarterly check in and feedback sessions on what local groups are learning on the ground, challenges, opportunities for growth, additional resources required and 5 campaign accelerator webinars and 2 in person organizing 101 sessions
Activity #3 Advance strategic communications by hiring a communications specialist to drive a provincial freshwater narrative with local connections to the WSA	Fall 2017	Local message testing in key geographic areas, Strategic message guide and communications kits linking local challenges to WSA
Activity #3 Coordinate ministerial meetings with Minister of Environment and Climate Change Solutions and Minister of Forests, Land and Resource Operations and Rural Development	Fall 2017 / Ongoing	1 meeting per legislative session
Activity #4 Provincial Reconnaissance to identify key partners, community leaders, local challenges and issues and maintain relationships in key areas	Short term (Spring 2018) Long term (WInter 2019)	Partner organizations from our reconnaissance priority regions signed on to campaign and organizing on issues in their region
Objective # 2: Local grassroots, recreation, stewardship groups and First Nations communities are engaged local stakeholders in the discussions around their watersheds health and protection		
Action #1 Support Local capacity on the ground with co-hosted regional water dialogues	Ongoing	Minimum of 2 water dialogues per key geographic area
Action #2 Resource staff organizing capabilities on the ground	Spring 2018- ongoing	3-6 organizers in key geographic areas have the funding required to drive organizing on the ground in their communities
Action #3 Build, support and facilitate the creation of a new organizing group in the Okanagan committed to advancing key WSA outcomes in the region.	Spring/Summer 2018	Community leaders identified and structure established by Spring 2018 with on the ground organizing beginning Summer 2018
Action #4 Coordinate Meetings with MLA's in Key Geographic Areas	Fall 2017 / Ongoing	A minimum of 1 meeting with local groups and their MLA in each Key Geographic Area per legislative session. Local community groups provided with messaging guides, literature and training on engage provincial representatives
Action # 5 Organize around water issues in targeted communities during municipal elections	Fall 2018	Organize 1 water dialogue, trained and active neighbourhood canvass teams, developed messaging guides, designed literature and training for local groups to engage with municipal representatives before election