



Bowker Creek Urban Watershed Renewal Initiative 2004 Annual Report

Goals

The BCI is based on the four goals from the watershed plan:

Goal 1: Individuals, community and special interest groups, institutions, governments, and businesses take responsibility for actions that affect the watershed.

Goal 2: Manage flows effectively.

Goal 3: Improve and expand public areas, natural areas, and biodiversity in the watershed.

Goal 4: Achieve and maintain acceptable water quality in the watershed.

Activities

In 2004, the BCI focused on the implementation strategy, outreach activities, the Master Drainage Plan (MDP) and restoration and monitoring projects.

Background

The Bowker Creek Urban Watershed Renewal Initiative (BCI) is a broad coalition of community, government, businesses and institutions working together to protect and enhance the ecological, social and economic health of the Bowker Creek watershed.

The BCI was established in March 2004 following the completion and adoption of the Bowker Creek Watershed Management Plan (BCWMP). Developing the BCWMP was an 18 month planning process and included several multi-stakeholder workshops and a public consultation process to determine the

vision, goals and objectives of the community for the watershed. Members of all levels of government, community organizations, institutions, business and industry participated. The plan was approved by the District of Saanich, City of Victoria, the District of Oak Bay and the Capital Regional District in 2003. Since the completion of the plan in 2003, and establishment of the BCI, there has been movement forward on the recommendations from the BCWMP. This is the first annual report for the BCI for its initial ten month period of activity from March 2004 to December 2004.

BCI Structure

The BCI is led by a consensus-based steering committee which is chaired by the CRD. The committee's role is to implement actions based on the goals of the BCWMP. Two subcommittees, an Outreach subcommittee and a Master Drainage Plan subcommittee, focus on the key issues of the BCI.

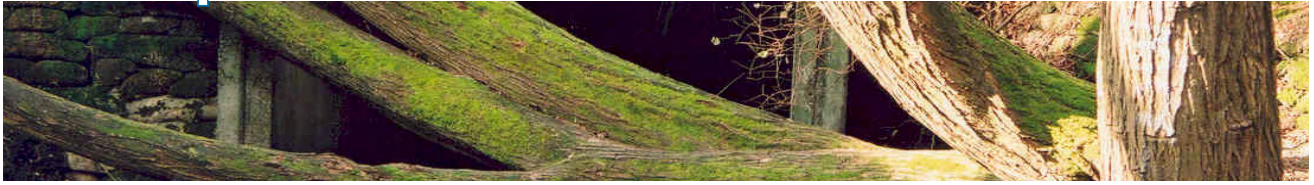
Additionally, there is a part-time coordinator at the CRD who initiates and manages projects, seeks funding and organizes the BCI. The coordinator position is funded by the partner municipalities of the District of Saanich (59%), City of Victoria (23%) and the District of Oak Bay (18%).

Implementation Strategy

An Implementation Strategy was developed to lay out a road map for the BCI and to determine where resources should be directed. It was approved by the Steering committee on July 16, 2004.

Short-term (2004-2005), high priority actions are to:

- conduct outreach activities to raise awareness within the watershed
- develop a Master Drainage Plan
- implement restoration and monitoring actions as funding and partnerships arise



Outreach Activities

During 2004, the BCI Outreach subcommittee developed an Outreach Plan which was approved by the Steering committee on December 3. The Outreach Plan identified the need to raise awareness about the Bowker Creek Initiative and the watershed, and to change citizen behaviour in the watershed in the long term. The Outreach Plan identified four main outreach objectives:

- 1) raise and maintain the profile of the Bowker Creek Initiative
- 2) raise and maintain awareness of the Bowker Creek watershed
- 3) encourage stakeholder participation in protecting and improving the watershed
- 4) foster long-term community stewardship.

In 2004, several outreach activities were undertaken. These included:

- Development of four educational interpretive signs, one for each municipality and the University of Victoria. They will be installed in spring 2005 following a community event to unveil the signs and launch the BCI on April 2;
- Hosting the 7th Annual Bowker Creek Clean Up and Rubber Duck Race (May 1, 2004) with Oak Bay High School Visions Environmental Club and Interact Club, Oak Bay Rotary Club, Friends of Bowker Creek and CRD Environmental Services. Approximately 45 people participated in the clean up, five shopping carts and two truck loads of garbage were removed and \$350 was raised for riparian plantings; and

- Presenting to conferences, community and school groups such as:
 - Society for Ecological Restoration International Conference in Victoria, BC
 - University of Victoria Restoration of Natural Systems and Environmental Studies classes
 - Oak Bay High School Interact and Visions Environmental Clubs
 - Oak Bay Rotary Club
 - church groups.

Master Drainage Plan

The Master Drainage Plan (MDP) is Phase 1 of an Integrated Stormwater Management Plan (ISMP). An ISMP combines hydrologic and hydraulic information provided by an MDP with ecological, social and economic information to provide solutions that will meet as many of the goals of the BCWMP as possible. The MDP will identify drainage solutions for the watershed and prioritize hydrological and environmental stormwater problems and potential solutions. The plan will also provide the estimated costs and the benefits for each solution.

Issues to be addressed in the ISMP include the:

- risk of property damage and safety concerns due to flooding, particularly in the lower reaches of Bowker Creek
- potential for opportunities associated with redevelopment throughout the watershed
- ongoing loss of aquatic and riparian habitat, and
- need for multi-jurisdictional decision-making within the watershed.



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A Master Drainage Plan Subcommittee was formed in 2004. The subcommittee developed a terms of reference for the MDP and has begun seeking funding for development of the MDP. The District of Saanich, City of Victoria and the CRD applied for initial funding for the MDP from the Ministry of Community, Aboriginal and Women's Services. Additionally, a flow monitoring device was installed at Trent Street to provide information required for the MDP.

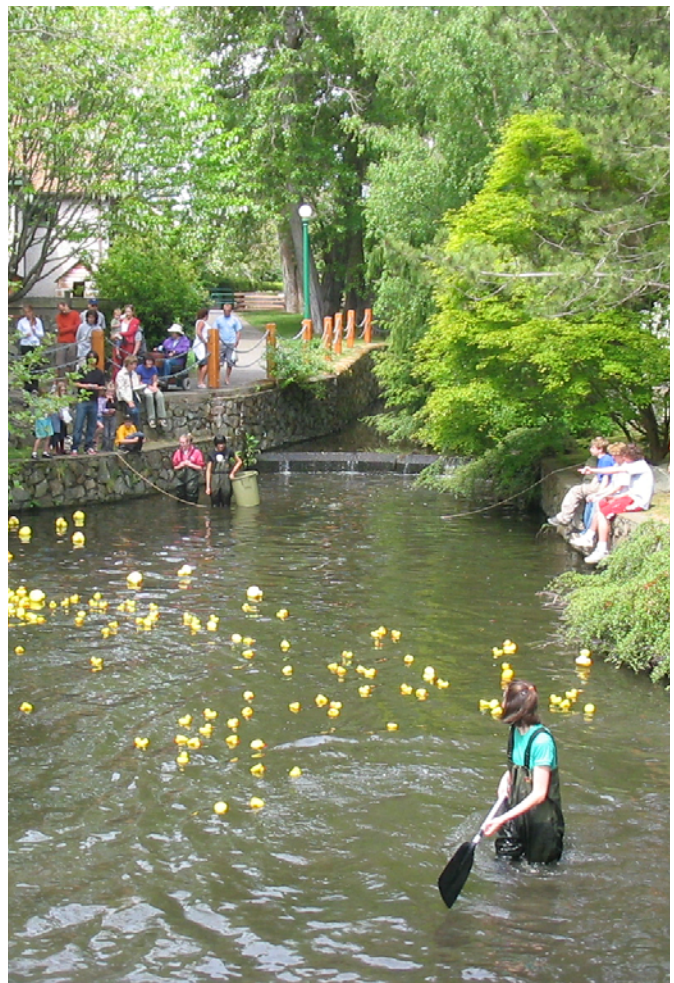
Phase 2 of the ISMP will address detailed ecological components of the ISMP, including health assessment, inventories and assessing options identified in the MDP. A Proper Functioning Condition (PFC) ecological assessment of Bowker Creek was initiated during 2004 to begin collecting information for Phase 2 of the Integrated Stormwater Management Plan. The Proper Functioning Condition assessment provides a qualitative evaluation of the ecological health of the creek channel by examining the hydrology, vegetation and soils attributes on a reach-by-reach basis.

Restoration and Monitoring

Restoration and monitoring activities were carried out by the BCI as opportunities presented themselves. The following activities were selected because they supported one or more of the BCWMP goals and were initiated and/or supported by partnerships with other organizations:

- planting riparian vegetation and invasive species removal with Oak Bay High School and St. Michael's University School
- working with District of Saanich staff to provide recommendations to Cedar Hill Park and Golf Course regarding the golf course drainage and the Bowker Creek tributary

- installing bioengineering on Bowker Creek downstream of Browning Park (District of Saanich)
- collaborating with the CRD and District of Saanich for a combined sewer and public access right-of-way on Richmond Elementary property between Newton and Townley streets, and
- providing professional guidance to other groups doing restoration work on Bowker Creek.



2004 Funding

In 2004, funding was provided for the BCI through various sources. The municipalities of Saanich, Victoria and Oak Bay provided funding for the BCI Coordinator. External funding agencies have supported the initiative by providing funding for projects within the watershed.

Funding Source	Funding	Item
Watershed Plan Coordinator		
District of Saanich	\$29,500	
City of Victoria	\$11,500	
District of Oak Bay	\$9,000	
Project Funding		
Environment Canada - Georgia Basin Action Plan	\$7,500	Interpretive signs and other outreach activities
Capital Regional District	\$7,000	Interpretive signs, meeting expenses, mapping, etc.
Provincial Capital Commission	\$3,420	Interpretive signs and other outreach activities
University of Victoria	\$3,000	Interpretive signs
Coast Capital Savings	\$2,000	Interpretive signs and other outreach activities
District of Saanich	\$2,000	Riparian plants for volunteer planting
Oak Bay High Visions Environmental Club	\$1,000	Riparian plants for volunteer planting
TOTAL 2004	\$75,920	

What's Next?

In 2005, the BCI intends to continue with activities initiated in 2004 to work towards further implementation of the BCWMP. These activities include:

Outreach Activities

Outreach actions identified for 2005 include jointly hosting the BCI Launch and Sign Unveiling (April 2) and 8th Annual Rubber Duck Race and Clean Up (May 14), installing channel identification signs and four interpretive signs, and continue public presentations.

Master Drainage Plan

In 2005, MDP activities will include continuing to seek funding, issuing the Request for Proposals and completing the MDP. Additionally, Phase 2 of the ISMP will begin by completing a PFC and bank stability assessment for each section of the channel and tributary.

Restoration and Monitoring

Restoration and monitoring activities in 2005 will focus on partnering with member municipalities to develop a greenways plan and strategy, initiating vegetation and wildlife inventories, conducting water quality monitoring and continuing school group invasive species removal and riparian vegetation planting program.

Summary

During the period of March to December 2004, significant progress has been made towards achieving the BCI's goals and in the implementation of the BCWMP. Specifically, an Implementation Strategy and Outreach Plan were developed, interpretive signs were prepared, community events were hosted, the Master Drainage Plan Terms of Reference were developed, on-the-ground restoration activities occurred, and \$26,920 in project funding obtained.

The BCI has been working with several agencies and groups to raise awareness within the watershed and to collaborate on watershed stewardship activities. These actions include working towards managing stormwater flows, decreasing contaminant inputs, protecting and enhancing habitat quality, achieving ecologically suitable land uses and advocating environmental protection for the watershed. Partnering with the municipal agencies and planning for land use within the watershed is essential to this process and a key action for the BCI.

The long-term vision and cooperation of the District of Saanich, City of Victoria and the District of Oak Bay to jointly fund the coordinator position and support the BCI Steering Committee is imperative for the success of this watershed-base initiative. Support from the CRD is also critical to its success. Without this support, the BCI would not have been able to achieve success in 2004 and begin to gain momentum for further achievements in 2005 and beyond. Continued commitment and support of member organizations is critical for effective implementation of the BCWMP over the next few years.