



# Bowker Creek Urban Watershed Renewal Initiative 2010 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.

## The BCI Partners

District of Saanich, City of Victoria, District of Oak Bay, Capital Regional District, University of Victoria, Friends of Bowker Creek Society, Quadra Cedar Hill Community Association, Camosun Community Association, North Jubilee Neighbourhood Association, Community Association of Oak Bay and members of the public.



BCI volunteers using the sheet mulching technique to control weeds and erosion.

## Background

The Bowker Creek Urban Watershed Renewal Initiative (BCI) is a coalition of communities, governments and institutions working together to protect and enhance the ecological, social and economic health of the Bowker Creek watershed. The BCI was established in 2004 following the completion and adoption of the Bowker Creek Watershed Management Plan by the District of Saanich, City of Victoria, District of Oak Bay, the Capital Regional District (CRD) and community groups.

The BCI is led by a consensus-based steering committee chaired by the CRD. The committee's role is to implement the watershed plan. Another subcommittee focuses on outreach activities. A part-time coordinator at the CRD initiates and

manages projects, seeks funding and organizes the BCI. This position is funded by the partner municipalities of Saanich (59%), Victoria (23%) and Oak Bay (18%). This is the sixth annual report since the establishment of the BCI.

## Accomplishments

In 2010, the main focus of the BCI was completion of the Bowker Creek Blueprint: A 100-year action plan to restore the Bowker Creek watershed, which included integrating input received through consultation with the public and elected officials. At the same time, BCI started to implement some of the "key actions for short-term implementation." Outreach and restoration projects also continued and maintained BCI's profile in the community.





## Bowker Creek Blueprint: A 100-year action plan to restore the Bowker Creek watershed

The Bowker Creek Blueprint is BCI's unique version of an Integrated Stormwater Management Plan. The Blueprint, completed in 2010, is a first-of-its-kind directed opportunistic plan to restore the watershed over the long term. The plan lays out principles of integrated watershed management and specific reach-by-reach actions that the municipalities and community groups can undertake to improve the Bowker Creek watershed. The Blueprint offers ways to deal with the flooding, water pollution and habitat loss that Bowker Creek has suffered due to urbanization. It also provides recommendations for a greenway corridor and pockets of nature within the urban core of Greater Victoria.

This year, BCI focused on community consultation by gathering input on the draft Bowker Creek Blueprint. The main event for public consultation was an open house held in February at Hillside Mall. Invitations were mailed to all residents and businesses in the entire watershed, resulting in over 300 residents giving feedback. Their input was incorporated and a much expanded section on monitoring was added, which outlines the 2009 baseline data. An appendix outlining the methodology of the monitoring program ensuring effective implementation monitoring into the future was also added.

Development of the Bowker Creek Blueprint was a major milestone for the BCI, and will support stewardship efforts in the years to come.



BCI moved forward with the implementation of the Blueprint, focusing on the identified key short-term actions and the principles of integrated watershed management. Highlights of implementation activities included:

- Worked with Oak Bay High and design team to secure approximately 20 metres of width for the creek and initiated the development of a conceptual restoration design.
- Started a demonstration riparian native plant garden in Oak Bay behind Fireman's Park, with high interest demonstrated by community and youth volunteering on site.
- Continued to work with Vancouver Island Health Authority (VIHA) to integrate the Blueprint into the Royal Jubilee Hospital Master Plan 2010–30.
- Began process to seek municipal adoption/endorsement of the Blueprint.
- Presented the Blueprint to Saanich's Shelbourne Corridor Action Plan Stakeholders committee and participated monthly to encourage integration of the Blueprint into all aspects of the plan, emphasizing the Blueprint's watershed wide actions and specific reach actions within the planning area.
- Worked with Saanich on the improvements to Browning Park.
- Hosted a Convening For Vancouver Island Forum on Bowker Creek, which focused on educating municipal elected officials and staff on the Blueprint.





### Outreach Events and Activities

Outreach activities also continued with the help of dedicated volunteers from the BCI's Outreach Subcommittee and the community at large.

- Hosted a tour of the Bowker watershed with a class from the University of Victoria
- The 12th Annual Rubber Ducky Race and Bowker Creek Clean-up, hosted by Oak Bay High School in May
- Two additional Bowker Creek pennant-making workshops
- Participated in the World Health Organization Saanich Family Bike Ride, by hosting the BCI display and watershed table
- Participated in the Shelbourne History Event, documenting elders' memories of Bowker Creek
- Continued with the creation of the Monteith Riparian Native Plant Demonstration Garden in Oak Bay with high participation from individuals, community groups and an enrichment class from Central Middle School
- Creation of a new BCI table top display which highlights BCI and the Blueprint

**In 2010, BCI volunteers  
logged approximately 440  
hours of work towards  
improving the Bowker  
Creek watershed!**

**Thank you all!**

### Restoration and Monitoring

Off Monteith Street in Oak Bay, BCI continued to establish a riparian native plant demonstration garden. Work focused on planting native plants and sheet mulching to control invasive plants. After working with Oak Bay Parks to clear the site of invasive plants, approximately 75 native plants were planted with funds from the 2009 Friends of TD grant. The invasive plants continued to be a problem for the site, so the technique of sheet mulching was undertaken with cooperation of Oak Bay Parks, who supplied leaf mulch. Volunteers laid out large sheets of recycled cardboard and then covered them with a thick layer of leaf mulch, carefully working around the native plants.

In order to monitor the water quality of Bowker Creek, the CRD Stormwater program experimented with placing fish boxes containing fish embryos in the creek at three sites (University of Victoria, Browning Park and near the outlet at Beach Drive). The purpose of the study is to examine the effects of pollution in the creek on the development of the fish embryos over a six-week period. The experiment will be repeated in Spring 2011. Results of the study are expected in mid-2011.



Placing *Oncorhynchus clarkii* (cutthroat trout) eyed stage embryos in fish box.



### 2010 Funding

Funding was provided for the BCI through various sources. The municipalities of Saanich, Victoria and Oak Bay provided funding for the BCI Coordinator. In 2010, funding acquired through grants was used to complete the Blueprint.

Funding Source	Funding (\$)*	Item
<b>Coordinator Funding</b>		
District of Saanich	\$39,398	BCI Coordinator
City of Victoria	\$15,319	BCI Coordinator
District of Oak Bay	\$11,835	BCI Coordinator
<b>Project Funding</b>		
Federation of Canadian Municipalities	\$15,910	Completion of Blueprint
BC Ministry of Community, Sport and Cultural Development	\$35,000	Municipal partnership contributions to obtain provincial infrastructure grant for completion and implementation of Blueprint
City of Victoria	\$5,000	Completion and implementation of Blueprint, outreach and administrative costs
District of Saanich	\$5,000	
Capital Regional District	\$20,400	
<b>TOTAL 2010*</b>	<b>\$147,962</b>	

\*Figures in this table do not include the value of municipal staff and volunteer time



Bowker Creek was celebrated with community workshops where residents could create these colourful pennants depicting individuals' appreciation of Bowker Creek.

### What's Next?

In 2011, the BCI will bring the Blueprint to municipal councils and to the University of Victoria for endorsement, while continuing on the implementation. Activities will focus on the recommended "key actions for short term implementation" and on encouraging municipalities, landowners and community groups to do their part by applying the identified "principles and actions for watershed management." In 2011, this will include collaboration with School District 61 during planning of the new Oak Bay High School, participating in the Shelbourne Corridor planning process, working with VIHA on the RJH Master Plan to incorporate Blueprint actions, and supporting municipalities in the creation of raingardens and other innovative rainwater management.

The BCI will continue to work with the District of Oak Bay and volunteers, neighbours and local schools to finish the restoration project on Monteith Street. The BCI will also continue outreach efforts through numerous public presentations and participation in community events.

BCI is going to be highlighted in Dianne Draper's university textbook, "Our Environment: A Canadian Perspective" 5th ed.

### Summary

2010 was a year of making final improvements to the Bowker Creek Blueprint and of successful outreach and restoration activities. The Bowker Creek Initiative maintained a high profile in the community and began the exciting new phase of implementing the Bowker Creek Blueprint over the short and long term.

For more information visit:  
[www.bowkercreekinitiative.ca](http://www.bowkercreekinitiative.ca)  
 or contact the BCI Coordinator at:  
[info@bowkercreekinitiative.ca](mailto:info@bowkercreekinitiative.ca)  
 250.360.3302.

