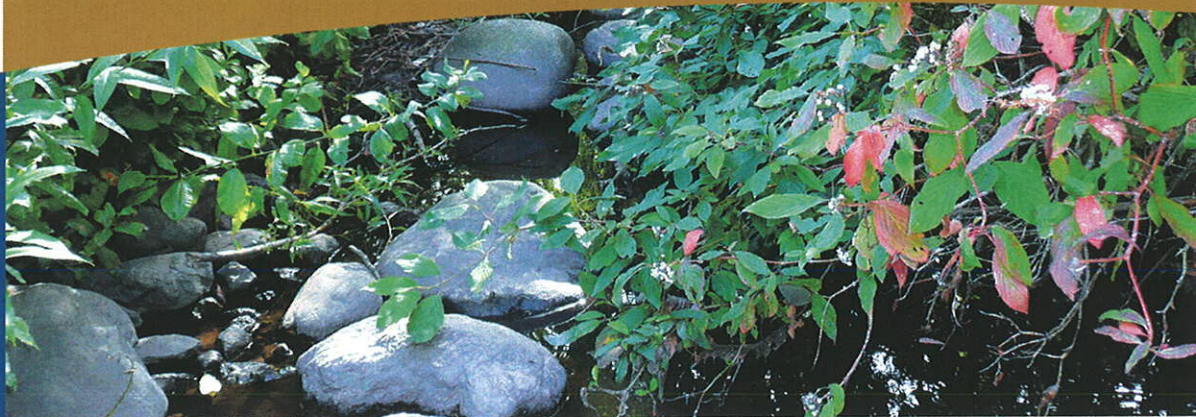


# The Bowker Creek Watershed Management Plan – Summary



Our vision for the Bowker Creek Watershed is that the varied human uses and natural areas in the Bowker watershed are managed to minimize runoff and pollution, making Bowker Creek a healthy stream that supports habitat for native vegetation and wildlife, and provides a community greenway to connect neighbourhoods.

Despite the changes that have occurred over time, people and wildlife still value Bowker Creek. Open portions of Bowker Creek and its adjacent riparian area provide habitat for plants, birds, small mammals, and pollution-tolerant aquatic creatures. Residents value streamside areas for recreational opportunities, especially at the creek's headwaters at UVic, at Browning Park in Saanich, at Bowker Creek Park in Oak Bay, and at the vacant BC Hydro lands. While the watershed will never be returned to its natural forested state, much can be done to protect and enhance its natural characteristics, and to convert degraded places into natural areas. The streamside corridor offers potential routes for greenways, providing safe, alternative travel routes across town. Some areas may provide the potential for daylighting the creek. A proposed land acquisition plan will enable decision makers to acquire key properties as they come available, to increase public areas or open the watercourse.

## What is the Bowker Creek Watershed Management Plan?

The watershed management plan addresses protection of property from flooding and erosion, protection of water quality, protection and restoration of natural areas, green space and habitats, and improved recreational opportunities. In the Bowker Creek Watershed, a plan is especially valuable given that three municipalities and numerous property owners manage the land in the watershed.

## How was this plan created?

In 2002, a forum of landowners, residents, community groups, and local and senior governments came together to develop the plan through a collaborative public process. Plan approval was obtained from the municipalities of Saanich, Victoria and Oak Bay and the Capital Regional District in 2003. The Bowker Creek Initiative (BCI) Steering Committee was established in 2004 to guide implementation of the watershed plan.



Forum members get an overview of the watershed from Mount Tolmie



A series of workshops allowed Forum members to develop the plan



The Bowker Creek Urban Watershed Renewal Initiative (BCI) is a unique multijurisdictional effort to improve the health of a highly urbanized watershed. Established to guide the implementation of the Bowker Creek Watershed Management Plan, the BCI will achieve the watershed plan goals by supporting incremental actions over long time frames – up to 100 years.



The BCI is working to address concerns about flooding, pollution, and the degraded condition of Bowker Creek. It is a collaborative effort between people, organizations and governments, who envision the creek as a community amenity and a healthy, life sustaining environment for native vegetation and wildlife.

## Goals for the Bowker Creek Watershed

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

- A. Ensure all interest holders understand the values of Bowker Creek and the watershed so they can act responsibly.
- B. Foster long-term community stewardship of Bowker Creek and celebrate accomplishments.
- C. Plan and manage land in the Bowker watershed in ways that create compact and attractive communities, increase areas of green space, reduce stormwater runoff, and improve water quality in Bowker Creek.



Community events such as this one on June 14, 2008, are a great way to raise awareness and community support.



Restoration projects present opportunities for the community to care for the watershed.

### Goal 2: Manage flows effectively

- A. Base watershed management decisions on a comprehensive understanding of the hydrological characteristics of the drainage system.
  - Manage the risk of flood damage to property near Bowker Creek.
  - Coordinate flow management decisions among jurisdictions.
- B. Encourage onsite retention and infiltration of stormwater to reduce the area of effective impervious surfaces in the watershed.



The 1999 flood above the intersection of Fort and Foul Bay. Approximately 50% of the watershed is covered by impervious, hard surfaces such as roofs, roads and parking lots. These hard surfaces and the pipe infrastructure that drains them contribute to peak flows and floods.



This parking lot at the Royal Jubilee Hospital is made of permeable pavement, to lessen run-off and improve water quality flowing to Bowker Creek. Permeable pavement is one low impact development technique that can be used on new construction to lessen traditional problems with urban runoff.



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

- A. Prepare a comprehensive inventory of watershed attributes.
- B. Protect and enhance existing natural areas (or areas with restoration potential) in the watershed, particularly adjacent to Bowker Creek.
- C. Create a multi-use greenway corridor from the headwaters to the ocean, in accordance with a regional greenway system.



Most above-ground sections of Bowker Creek are dominated by exotic invasive species, such as the blackberry and yellow willow seen in this picture. Because the stream channel has been deepened and narrowed to maximize other land uses, bank erosion is common.



Undeveloped green space adjacent to Bowker Creek – such as the BC Hydro lands in this photo – is used by local residents and wildlife.

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

- A. Identify water quality problems and causes.
- B. Meet or exceed provincial water quality guidelines for aquatic life.
- C. Establish and maintain stable naturalized banks to protect water quality and public safety.

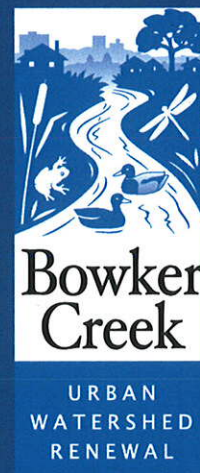


Photo credit: Taylor Davis

Water pollution is conveyed to Bowker Creek through storm drains. Hydrocarbons from leaking car engines are common pollutants in Bowker Creek.



Municipalities manage the open and the underground sections of Bowker Creek for stormwater drainage, and are working to address problems caused by occasional floods, hydrocarbons, and spills of toxic substances.

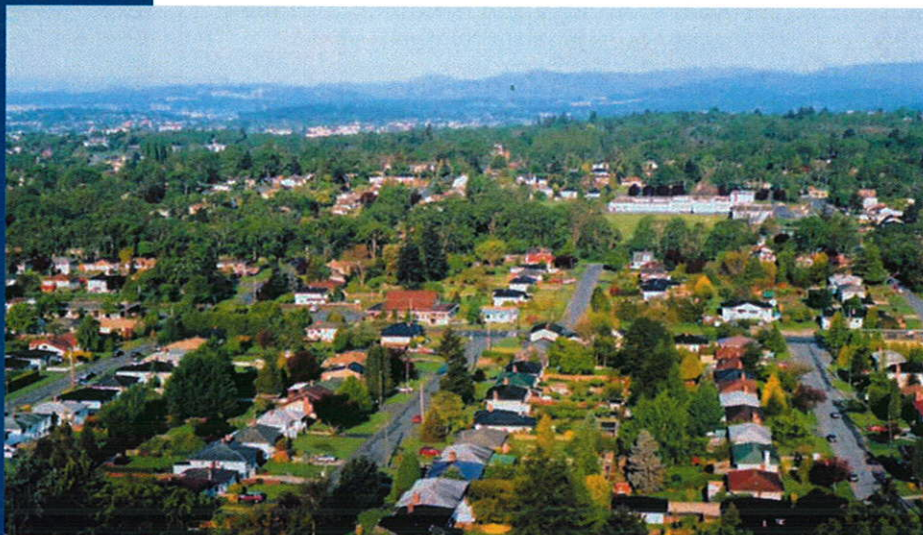


#### Partners

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







The Bowker Creek Watershed is in the Capital Regional District (CRD), and includes portions of the District of Saanich, the City of Victoria, and the District of Oak Bay. It is one of the most highly urbanized watersheds in the CRD; only two and one-half kilometers of Bowker Creek's eight kilometer length remain above ground.



### More information

Information on the Bowker Creek Initiative and the ongoing implementation of the Bowker Creek Watershed Management Plan can be found at the following website:

[www.bowkercreekinitiative.ca](http://www.bowkercreekinitiative.ca)

Contact the Bowker Creek Initiative Coordinator at:  
[info@bowkercreekinitiative.ca](mailto:info@bowkercreekinitiative.ca)  
 or 250-360-3302.

This is a summary version of the Bowker Creek Watershed Management Plan. For a full version, please contact the Capital Regional District or visit [www.bowkercreekinitiative.ca](http://www.bowkercreekinitiative.ca)

