



News Release

For Immediate Release

Restoration of Bowker Creek at Oak Bay High Now Complete

March 1, 2016

Victoria, British Columbia

Restoration of a section of Bowker Creek that flows along the Oak Bay High School (OBHS) property was unveiled to the public today. This project was made possible thanks to a \$738,000 contribution from the Federal Gas Tax Fund.

The project integrates watershed management objectives for a more natural, healthy creek with the creation of new public spaces and experiential learning opportunities. Community members and students from OBHS participated in native plantings along the creek.

The creek restoration is one of ten short-term actions in the Bowker Creek Blueprint - a 100-year vision for restoring the health of this highly urbanized watershed. Restoration will significantly increase overall creek health by improving water quality, habitat and flow conveyance. Restoration will also reduce downstream flooding and improve climate adaptability. Project features include a winding creek that mimics a more natural watercourse, native plantings, an accessible pathway, a viewing area, and an outdoor classroom.

Municipalities, institutions, residents and businesses will help achieve this vision by implementing actions that reduce the amount of water entering the creek and that take steps to filter contaminants from runoff. Actions include installing rain gardens, planting native species, re-using water on-site and swapping asphalt or concrete for permeable pavers. The Bowker Creek Initiative, supported by the Capital Regional District, works to assist municipalities and landowners to implement these actions.

The Government of Canada provides \$253,276,892 in annual funding for municipal infrastructure in British Columbia through the federal Gas Tax Fund. The Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM) administers the Gas Tax Fund in BC, in collaboration with Canada and British Columbia.

Quotes

“Through the federal Gas Tax Fund, the Government of Canada is allowing communities in BC, and all across Canada, to make informed decisions about their infrastructure investments and how best to spend federal dollars. Community officials are best positioned to identify their specific needs, and the federal Gas Tax Fund supports them in making those strategic investments. This project will contribute to building a strong, inclusive and sustainable community in Oak Bay.”

*The Honourable Amarjeet Sohi,
Minister of Infrastructure and Communities*

“The completion of the Bowker Creek restoration project underscores the value of B.C.'s partnership in the Gas Tax program. Through this restoration project, we have cultivated a beautiful green space for community connections and student studies, while at the same time putting in place infrastructure to protect the health of this area and improve its long-term sustainability and natural resources.”

*The Honourable Peter Fassbender
Minister of Community, Sport and Cultural Development*

“This project has significantly transformed the section of Bowker Creek that flows along the Oak Bay High School property. We are thrilled to see not only the restored creek, but also a new community greenspace and outdoor classroom that will let everyone learn more about this great natural amenity.”

Nils Jensen
Mayor, District of Oak Bay

“The outdoor classroom and new curriculum designed around the creek gives our students the chance to learn about freshwater biology, creek hydrology and the adaptive capacity of waterways. We couldn’t be more pleased to be a partner in this innovative project.”

Dave Thompson
Principal
Oak Bay High School

“The restoration of Bowker Creek is a priority shared by the District of Oak Bay and the Capital Regional District. I am pleased to see significant federal support for this local priority.”

Al Richmond
UBCM President

Associated Links

The Bowker Creek Urban Watershed Renewal Initiative (BCI) is a collaboration between local governments, community groups, institutions and private citizens to improve the health of Bowker Creek and its watershed. The partners in the BCI have come together to assist with and coordinate the efforts of the District of Saanich, the City of Victoria, and the District of Oak Bay and other agencies and interests in implementing the [Bowker Creek Watershed Management Plan](#) and the [Bowker Creek Blueprint](#).

To learn more about the federal Gas Tax Fund visit: <http://www.infrastructure.gc.ca/plan/gtf-fte-eng.html>.

- 30 -

Contacts

Ministry of Community, Sport and Cultural Development
Communications
250-953-3677

Nils Jensen
Mayor, District of Oak Bay
Cell: 250-882-0549

Paul Taylor
Director of Communications
UBCM
250-356-2938