



**National Watershed Stewardship  
Report:  
Policy recommendations and  
suggested actions to expand and  
strengthen watershed stewardship in  
Canada.**

Prepared by

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The National Watershed Stewardship Report provides policy recommendations and actions for expanding and strengthening watershed stewardship in Canada. It is the key summary document for the National Watershed Stewardship Policy Discussion, a Voluntary Sector Initiative (VSI) funded project completed in partnership with Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO). A National Watershed Stewardship Committee was formed to guide the policy discussions. Members of the committee were selected to represent a diversity of experience and range of perspectives on watershed stewardship in Canada, and include, Clean Annapolis River Project, Comité ZIP Baie des Chaleurs, Conservation Ontario, Land Stewardship Centre of Canada (Alberta), and Langley Environmental Partners Society.

The National Watershed Stewardship recommendations were derived through workshops, surveys, and on-line discussions with stewardship groups in five regions: Maritimes, Quebec, Ontario, Prairies, and Pacific. In July 2003, volunteers and professionals from each region met for a workshop in Langley, B.C to amalgamate regional results and develop recommendations and actions. A draft report was then presented and discussed at the *Leading Edge Conference: Stewardship and Conservation in Canada*, July 3-6, 2003. Since the Leading Edge Conference, the recommendations have been revised to reflect a broader range of input from watershed stewardship organizations across Canada.

Watershed stewardship focuses on promoting, monitoring, and conserving the ecological health and biodiversity of an area of land that drains waters, through a stream and its tributaries to a shared destination (i.e. a watershed). Since watersheds often span many jurisdictional boundaries (e.g., of governments, of agencies, and of organizations), effective watershed stewardship requires strong collaboration among communities and all levels of government. Co-ordinated governance and integrated decision-making is then needed among environmental, economic, and social interests. Building understanding and partnerships among aboriginal and non-aboriginal communities, improving collaborative and inclusive decision-making, and respecting aboriginal rights are all key components of successful watershed stewardship. Watersheds also include coastal zones and the principles and issues pertaining to watershed stewardship apply equally to the stewardship of coastal zones.

An investment into community-based, watershed stewardship can provide the following benefits:

- Effective monitoring of the processes that influence ecosystem integrity. Watershed are the most effective unit to monitor ecosystem integrity because everything within a natural system is inter-connected;
- An economic and effective way of protecting watersheds, supporting community activities, and delivering government mandates and programs. A community-based model of ecosystem management has been shown to be 5 to 12 times more financially efficient than a direct government delivery approach;
- A long-term, pro-active approach to environmental protection; it is more cost effective and efficient to conserve natural systems than to replicate or restore them;
- Healthier societies where people share information and work together to realize common goals that benefit their watersheds and their communities;
- Collaborative governance models that are able to address complex socio-ecological and technical dilemmas. Watershed stewardship promotes joint target setting, monitoring, and evaluation, leading to strong accountability in achieving shared goals and objectives;
- Improved commitment to international conventions and agreements.

The report describes 22 recommendations with implementing actions for government and community, to expand and strengthen watershed stewardship programs and activities. Implementing these actions will not necessarily require the introduction of new programs but may require a commitment to build on existing ones. In addition, since watershed stewardship includes all human activities on the landscape, the recommendations are strongly linked to numerous national policies and strategies that are being developed across federal departments, particularly those associated with *Canada's Stewardship Agenda*. The following non-prioritized list are identified as the most important actions for implementation:

- Provide sufficient, long-term funding for volunteer and community-based organizations to work with landholders to plan and implement stewardship (Recommendation 5);
- Provide mechanisms for different watershed organizations to co-ordinate activities, exchange ideas, and share experiences so that programs are delivered as efficiently and effectively as possible (Recommendation 9);
- Legislate watershed planning and ensure the integration of watershed stewardship programs into existing policy regulations and activities (Recommendation 10);
- Develop a public awareness campaign aimed at increased understanding of the importance of watershed stewardship (Recommendation 13);
- Commit to building collaborative partnerships with aboriginal communities, industry (including forestry, agriculture, mining and energy), all levels of government, and community groups (Recommendation 17);
- Develop and support environmentally sound measures that allow landholders to correct ecological problems on their land (e.g. financial and tax incentives, agri-environmental payments) (Recommendation 19); and
- Provide the necessary tools to monitor and interpret data, and ensure that the results are used to adaptively manage program delivery and implementation (Recommendation 21).

The next phase of this initiative will involve communicating and implementing the recommendations described in this report. The National Watershed Steering Committee has identified six strategic priorities for this phase:

1. Communicate report findings with federal, territorial and provincial government agencies and encourage implementation of government actions;
2. Build commitment and support to implement community actions through the strengthening of regional stewardship networks;
3. Strengthen partnerships with aboriginal communities, industry, and municipal governments;
4. Build on existing stewardship initiatives and actions, particularly those associated with *Canada's Stewardship Agenda*;
5. Establish a Stewardship Task Force responsible for developing and implementing a common stewardship vision and strategy; and
6. Assist in establishing appropriate mechanisms to increase co-ordination and efficiency among current stewardship investments. This may include establishing a Stewardship Fund that will provide ongoing support and expansion of stewardship activities on a project-by-project basis.

This report will be of significance to all parties and individuals involved with, or having an interest in, watershed stewardship. The recommendations will be of particular interest to those with a mandate to develop or strengthen stewardship programs within their department or organization.

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## INTRODUCTION

*“We see stewardship initiatives as efforts to create and deepen a self-perpetuating and deeply personal connection between humans and the natural ecosystem. One significant advantage of stewardship initiatives is that everyone already has the desired connection; we need only help uncover it.” Salmon River Watershed Roundtable, Salmon Arm, BC*

### What is the National Watershed Stewardship Report?

The *National Watershed Stewardship Report* is the key document produced by the National Watershed Stewardship Policy Discussion, a Voluntary Sector Initiative (VSI) funded project completed in partnership with Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO).<sup>1</sup> The Report presents policy recommendations and suggested actions designed to expand and strengthen existing watershed stewardship programs and activities. The Report synthesizes a significant quantity of input from a broad cross-section of stewardship organizations in Canada. Appendix 1 presents a full description of the nation-wide consultation process that resulted in the Report.

### What is Watershed Stewardship?

A watershed is defined as a geographic area bounded by topographic features and height of land that drains waters to a shared destination. Every waterway (stream, tributary, ect.) has an associated watershed; and smaller watersheds join together to become larger watersheds. Watersheds are the preferred geographic unit to undertake environmental planning and stewardship delivery. The appropriate size of the watershed for use in planning and implementation depends on the issue, the organization or group doing the planing, and/or the number of stakeholders involved.<sup>2</sup>

*Canada’s Stewardship Agenda (CSA)* defines stewardship as, “Canadians-including landowners and other individual citizens, private companies, and volunteers – caring for our land, air, water, and sustaining the natural processes on which life depends. Aboriginal communities share directly in stewardship and have unique experience in managing land.” (CSA, p. 1) There are many alternative definitions of stewardship but all involve some of the following aspects:

- Sustainability and sustaining natural systems for generations to come;
- Recognizing that natural systems and processes are vital for life-supporting systems ;
- Utilizing a holistic, ecosystem perspective;
- Involving communities; and
- Defining long-term goals and projects (Dovetail Consulting Inc., 2003, p. 3).

Watershed stewardship involves the aspects described above, but activities are organized within the ecological boundaries of a watershed. Watershed stewardship actions and activities are organized around, and focused on promoting, monitoring, and conserving the ecological health and biodiversity of a watershed. Since watersheds often span across many jurisdictional boundaries (e.g., of governments, of agencies, and of organizations), effective watershed stewardship requires strong collaboration among communities and all levels of government. This leads to co-ordinated governance and integrated decision-making among environmental, economic, and social interests (Veale, 2003, p 1; Doppelt, 2000, p 54).<sup>3</sup>

Watershed stewardship includes the coastal zone, as all principles and issues pertaining to watershed stewardship apply equally to the stewardship of coastal zones.

### **Aboriginal governance**

The authors of this report recognize and respect the unique role that aboriginal communities have to play in watershed stewardship and governance in Canada. Building understanding and partnerships among aboriginal and non-aboriginal communities, improving collaborative and inclusive decision-making, and respecting aboriginal rights are all key components of successful watershed stewardship.

### **Why is the National Watershed Stewardship Report Important?**

Stewardship on a watershed basis is recognized in Canada and in many parts of the world, as an effective approach for protecting water resources and for creating healthy, sustainable societies (Veale, 2003). Despite significant improvements in environmental and social conditions across the country, watershed stewardship programs still require additional support through legal, policy, financial, and institutional means. Based on an extensive, countrywide consultation process, the Report's policy recommendations and suggested actions will strengthen watershed stewardship programs across Canada.

The authors of the Report believe it represents a valuable resource to senior government officials who are advancing and developing national level stewardship support programs. Implementing these recommendations will not necessarily require the introduction of new institutions but will require a commitment to build on existing programs. Appendix 2 provides a few examples of the many excellent watershed stewardship programs presently in place across Canada.

### **Contributing to the implementation of *Canada's Stewardship Agenda (CSA)***

The implementation of the watershed stewardship recommendations will contribute significantly to the implementation of *Canada's Stewardship Agenda (CSA)*.<sup>4</sup> The Federal-Provincial-Territorial Resource Ministers endorsed *Canada's Stewardship Agenda* in September 2002. However, over the last year, the CSA has received criticism for not engaging a wide range of interests from the resource industry, environmental organizations, and aboriginal communities. There is also a need to integrate the CSA into "watershed conservation policy, ocean stewardship, forestry strategies, agricultural policy, and parks initiatives" (Canadian Wildlife Service, 2003 p. 3). To address these concerns and to ensure the future relevance of the CSA, the Federal-Provincial-Territorial Stewardship (FPTS) Working Group identified the implementation of the recommendations outlined in this report as one of the priority actions needed to implement *Canada's Stewardship Agenda* (Canadian Wildlife Service, 2003).

### **Contribution to national, provincial, and territorial policies and strategies**

Since the watershed approach includes all human activities on the landscape, the recommendations are intimately connected to numerous national policies and strategies that are being developed across federal departments, as well as ongoing provincial and territorial initiatives. National policies and strategies include the *Agricultural Policy Framework*,<sup>5</sup> *Canada's Ocean Strategy*,<sup>6</sup> the *Species at Risk Act*,<sup>7</sup> *Draft National Fresh Water Fisheries Strategy*,<sup>8</sup> *Environmental Stewardship Strategy*,<sup>9</sup> *National Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities*<sup>10</sup>, and *Canada's National Forest Strategy*.<sup>11</sup> Examples of provincial initiatives include, part two of the report on the Walkerton Inquiry<sup>12</sup> and Alberta's *Framework for Water Management Planning* and the *Partnership Framework for Watershed Planning and Stewardship*.

## Why Invest in Watershed Stewardship?

### **Watersheds are the best unit to monitor natural processes**

Statistics related to wetlands,<sup>13</sup> endangered species,<sup>14</sup> fisheries,<sup>15</sup> drinking water,<sup>16</sup> forestry,<sup>17</sup> and protected areas<sup>18</sup> illustrate that many natural systems in Canada are threatened. The solutions to these environmental threats are becoming more complex as cumulative environmental effects spread over long time periods and across wide geographic ranges (Doppelt, 2000, p 3). Effects cannot be addressed in isolation because everything within a natural system is interconnected. Watersheds divide the landscape into hydrologically defined geographic areas that are effective integrators of numerous environmental processes. As such, watersheds are recognized as the most effective unit for monitoring the processes that influence ecosystem integrity (Institute for Resources and Environment, 1999).

### **Watershed stewardship is economically efficient**

Many government departments have experienced dramatic funding cuts. At the same time they are charged with addressing the complex challenges inherent in managing resources for the public good. For example, between 1994 -1995 and 1998-1999, the budget for Fisheries and Oceans Canada was cut by one-third, from \$1.4 billion to \$950 million. Meanwhile Environment Canada's budget dropped 30 percent, from \$800 million in 1988 to \$550 million in 1998 (Boyd, 2003, p. 239). These cut backs were felt at the local level with the termination of many valuable stewardship projects, such as the Habitat Conservation and Stewardship Programme in British Columbia. It is estimated that recent federal and provincial government cutbacks from salmon restoration programs in BC amount to \$44.5 million dollars per annum (Dovetail Consulting Inc., 2003, p. 20). As a result, many government departments are seeking more economically effective ways to meet their mandates.<sup>19</sup> Stewardship programs are proven to be an economic and effective way of protecting watersheds and supporting community activities:

- The Atlantic Coastal Action Program (ACAP), a community-based model of ecosystem management, is 12 times more financially efficient in contributing to Environment Canada's goals than a direct delivery approach. ACAP also provided new economic activity to Atlantic Canada through a direct GDP impact of \$22.01 million (Gardner Pinfold Consulting Economists Limited, 2002).
- Through the Habitat Conservation and Stewardship Program (HCSP), in British Columbia, DFO expended about \$3,005,566 to support HCSP stewards. For this investment, \$14,696,394 (including donated volunteer time) was leveraged from third parties. This means that for every one HCSP dollar invested into communities, about five was contributed back to protecting fish habitat (Fisheries and Oceans Canada, 2003, p. 3).

See Appendix 2 for more examples of successful watershed stewardship programs across.

### **Watershed stewardship provides ecological services**

Watershed stewardship provides a range of critical ecological services while preserving natural and cultural resources. For example, its programs ensure individual and public health by providing a clean, reliable water supply as well as playing an important role in managing floods and coping with droughts (National Roundtable on Environment and Economy, 2003, p. 9). Stewardship provides a long-term and pro-active approach to environmental protection. It is more cost effective and efficient to conserve natural systems than to replicate or restore them.<sup>20</sup> The economic cost of the Walkerton tragedy was more than 64.5 million, excluding the impact in terms of human suffering and loss of life. In Part Two

of the Walkerton Inquiry, the Honourable Dennis O'Connor, recommended watershed-based source protection planning as the best way to protect drinking water (O'Connor, 2002).

### **Watershed stewardship provides social services**

Watershed stewardship builds a sense of community because it encourages people to share information and work together to realize common goals that benefit both the watershed and their community. When individuals voluntarily participate in activities, they build social ties and contribute to building healthier societies (Dovetail Consulting Inc., 2003, p. 26; Brock, 2000). Due to their community-level work and support, watershed stewardship organizations are strategically positioned to identify and remain responsive to local opportunities and needs, and to share program benefits in a fair manner. In addition, watershed stewardship programs and activities contribute to social and economic improvements by providing employment opportunities and livelihoods to people in their respective watersheds. Its programs also provide opportunities for research, environmental education, civic involvement, recreation, and tourism.

### **Watershed stewardship develops collaborative governance models**

The traditional command and control regulatory approach to environmental governance is not sufficient to address the highly dynamic and complex needs of ecosystem management (Doppelt 2000, p ii). Watershed stewardship can help to ensure that positive partnership efforts are brought to bear on complex socio-ecological and technical dilemmas. This is especially important when management responsibilities and challenges extend across the land and seascape, involving many jurisdictions and a diversity of interests. Watershed stewardship programs provide larger pools of knowledge and resources for use in meeting management objectives than would be available to any single agency. Joint target setting, monitoring and evaluation also provide strong accountability for performance in achieving shared goals and objectives.

### **Watershed stewardship supports international commitments**

Watershed stewardship programs can significantly help the Canadian Government honour its commitments to international conventions and agreements. For example they are essential components in helping to meet global green-house gas emission reductions and maintaining global biodiversity conservation strategies. More specifically, stewardship is identified as a priority area required to advance Canada's response to the Convention on Biodiversity, for which Environment Canada plays a policy-making, co-ordinating, catalyzing, and facilitating role (Environment Canada, 2003). The priority areas for biodiversity were endorsed by Ministers at the Joint Ministerial meeting in September 2002.<sup>21</sup>

### **Who is this Report for?**

This report will be of significance to all parties and individuals involved with, or having an interest in, watershed stewardship. These include community groups, aboriginal communities, landholders, educational institutions, and all levels of government. The recommendations will be of particular interest to those with a mandate to develop or strengthen stewardship programs within their departments or organization.

We believe that watershed stewardship presents the most economically efficient means of protecting Canadian watersheds, creating valuable ecological and social services, and showcasing Canada as a world leader in good governance and environmental stewardship.

## POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The following policy recommendations and actions for implementation are based upon input from a broad cross-section of communities and individuals directly involved in watershed stewardship across Canada. The recommendations are organized to reflect the diverse and important roles that community, the private sector, and government (federal, territorial, provincial, and municipal) all have in improving watershed stewardship in Canada.

In reading the recommendations, please note that:

- The recommendations are grouped under seven themes: Founding Mechanisms, Funding, Governance, Information and Communication, Partnerships, Volunteers, and Monitoring and Evaluation;
- The report identifies key actions for community and government acknowledging that, in many cases, there is substantial overlap in roles and priorities between groups;
- Aboriginal communities may be draw from either the community or government sections, depending on their own capacity and resource assessments;
- Actions of secondary importance for implementation are listed in Appendix 3;
- In this report, “appropriate scale” or “area of delivery” is used to imply the most appropriate watershed scale defined for each individual case; and
- Watershed stewardship includes the coastal zone, as all principles and issues pertaining to watershed stewardship apply equally to the stewardship of coastal zones.

### THEME 1: FOUNDING MECHANISMS

**RECOMMENDATION 1: Use an ecosystem-based approach to define and harmonize jurisdictions, mandates, and activities along watershed boundaries.**

<b>ACTIONS</b>	
<b>COMMUNITY</b>	<b>GOVERNMENT</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Raise awareness within communities about watershed functions, definitions, and boundaries from both an ecological and legislative aspect.</li> <li>• Develop a network of local level and sub-watershed organizations that feed into a regional basin-level and provincial/territorial umbrella.</li> <li>• Create consistency among watershed stewardship organizations’ mandates, policies, programs, and activities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create consistency and synergies among involved agencies’ mandates, policies, programs, and activities.</li> <li>• Provide a mechanism for different jurisdictions and groups to meet and work together.</li> <li>• Move away from a compartmentalized approach to management. For example, involve multiple DFO branches in program delivery.</li> </ul>

**RECOMMENDATION 2: Create opportunities to engage all parties in the founding and ongoing support of formal and informal watershed stewardship groups.**

**ACTIONS**

**GOVERNMENT AND COMMUNITY**

- Proactively engage all parties, particularly those not currently involved.
- Involve stakeholders in stewardship projects and encourage them to involve others.
- Use local knowledge to build local acceptance (bridging the gap between “them” and “us”).

**RECOMMENDATION 3: Use a strategic approach to design and initiate new watershed stewardship programs.**

**ACTIONS**

**COMMUNITY**

- Work with government and community members to develop a common vision, goals, objectives, and a prioritized action plan to identify new watershed stewardship programs using an appropriate geographic scale.
- Identify group champions (individuals from community, government, and conservation agencies) that can support the start-up process with technical and political perspectives.

**GOVERNMENT**

- Use client-centred models that build on previous and existing programs (such as the Atlantic Coastal Action Program and the Habitat Conservation and Stewardship Program) to design and implement stewardship programs.
- Support stewardship programs collaboratively with all relevant parties, aligned with local environmental, economic, and social needs, and delivered at the local level.

**RECOMMENDATION 4: Provide the support to meet the specific challenges of emerging watershed stewardship groups and programs.**

**ACTIONS**

**COMMUNITY**

- Provide mentoring and support between government, non-government, and between community groups.

**GOVERNMENT**

- Allow sufficient time and funding for planning and design during start up of programs.

**GOVERNMENT AND COMMUNITY**

- Create and make readily accessible user-friendly resources (e.g., through the stewardship portal or through local on-the ground means) that can be adapted and used by newly formed groups. Useful resources include, handbooks, watershed kits, and templates for organizational structure.
- Allocate resources and provide support to individuals who can promote watershed stewardship.

## THEME 2: FUNDING

**RECOMMENDATION 5: Create stability for watershed stewardship groups and programs by generating long term, stable funding through diverse sources.**

### ACTIONS

#### COMMUNITY

- Create a fiscally responsible “cushion” fund that will allow organizations to operate if project funding is not available (this may not always be possible with some small, volunteer groups).
- Diversify funding partnerships.

#### GOVERNMENT

- Provide sufficient funding for non-government, community-based groups (especially small, volunteer groups) to support co-ordinators and to ensure ongoing support for on-the-ground projects.
- Ensure that funding is available to sustain a long-term commitment to stewardship (e. g. program funding should be provided beyond a five-year term).

#### GOVERNMENT AND COMMUNITY

- Demonstrate (by considering social, economic, and environmental benefits) that core funding to watershed stewardship organizations is a good long-term investment (Core funding could be achieved through a foundation/trust fund model).

**RECOMMENDATION 6: Offer specific assistance and training to sustain organizations and to optimize funding allocations.**

### ACTIONS

#### COMMUNITY

- Support organizational capacity development. For example, management skills, revenue generation and, funding optimization, proposal writing.

#### GOVERNMENT

- Provide consistently scheduled training programs and support organizational capacity development for community groups. For example, offer training in, management skills, revenue generation, funding optimization, and proposal writing.

#### GOVERNMENT AND COMMUNITY

- Work collaboratively to implement programs that allow for direct linkages and support between community groups and government. For example, the “Atlantic Coastal Action Program windows” created employee liaisons between Environment Canada and the ACAP organizations.

**RECOMMENDATION 7: Develop effective criteria and processes for funding community stewardship groups.**

**ACTIONS**

**GOVERNMENT AND COMMUNITY**

- Clarify the values of watershed stewardship (e.g. through an economic evaluation of the return on investments), and incorporate the findings into funding decisions.
- Streamline decision-making processes within funding agencies (e.g., government, industry, NGO).
- Develop criteria (such as “proven watershed stewardship capability”, and “proactive stewardship”) that recognize and value good stewardship.

**RECOMMENDATION 8: Develop economic incentive to encourage stewardship amongst landholders, industry (e.g., agriculture, forestry, energy, and mining), and government.**

**ACTIONS**

**COMMUNITY**

- Assist in developing and utilizing tools that accurately value stewardship activities.

**GOVERNMENT**

- Provide funding and support to develop and utilize tools that accurately value stewardship activities.

**GOVERNMENT AND COMMUNITY**

- In partnership with all parties, design a framework and implement incentives to encourage stewardship amongst landholders, industry (e.g., agriculture, forestry, energy and mining), and government.

## THEME 3: GOVERNANCE

**RECOMMENDATION 9: Support the development of a national coalition/network of watershed stewardship organizations.**

<b>ACTIONS</b>	
<b>COMMUNITY</b>	<b>GOVERNMENT</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide resources to establish regional and national networks where appropriate. Build on existing structures where possible.</li> </ul>
<b>GOVERNMENT AND COMMUNITY</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In co-operation with existing local watershed stewardship partners, identify or create a stable, long-term, central organization for each watershed.</li> <li>Establish an advisory group responsible for establishing regional/national networks and who can recommend representation, roles, and responsibilities from local, regional, provincial, territorial, and federal participants.</li> <li>Establish guiding principles of openness, transparency, inclusiveness, flexibility, and respect.</li> </ul>	

**RECOMMENDATION 10: Develop and implement policies and guidelines to facilitate watershed planning and to deliver programs.**

<b>ACTIONS</b>	
<b>COMMUNITY</b>	<b>GOVERNMENT</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with government and other community groups to produce combined watershed reports.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Legislate watershed planning and ensure the integration of watershed stewardship programs into existing policy regulations and activities. For example, Conservation Ontario and Water Quality Management Areas in Washington State.</li> <li>Wetland protection policies should be completed in all provinces. For example, in Alberta, the wetlands strategy should be implemented as part of the Water Strategy.</li> </ul>
<b>GOVERNMENT AND COMMUNITY</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Commit resources to support management operations and to provide a long-term commitment to watershed stewardship policies and programs.</li> <li>Allow sufficient time for all program/project phases: planning and design, implementation, ongoing operation (including monitoring and assessment), and wind-down (including final evaluation).</li> <li>Integrate the protection of wetlands and other natural features into the design and implementation of watershed stewardship activities and programs.</li> </ul>	

**RECOMMENDATION 11: Establish and maintain long-term, multi-party watershed governance bodies (e.g., all-party committees, joint management boards, and boards of directors).**

**ACTIONS**

**COMMUNITY**

- Use transparent, inclusive processes to create local watershed stewardship governance bodies. Use existing organizations as much as possible.

**GOVERNMENT**

- Establish mechanisms to create local watershed stewardship governance bodies, using transparent and inclusive processes. Use existing organizations as much as possible.
- Establish permanent organizations that have the resources and staff to facilitate the implementation of watershed stewardship programs and activities. For example, the Conservation Authorities or Water Quality Management Areas in Washington State.

**GOVERNMENT AND COMMUNITY**

- Identify and represent all parties with a vested interest.
- Ensure that watershed governance bodies have decision-making powers and a strong and stable legal or policy base, supported by adequate funding, to ensure that stewardship happens.
- Establish guiding principles of openness, transparency, inclusiveness, flexibility, and respect.

**RECOMMENDATION 12: Ensure accountability of watershed policies and programs.**

**ACTIONS**

**GOVERNMENT AND COMMUNITY**

- Ensure that all watershed stewardship-governing bodies engage in “meaningful consultation” with their constituencies (e.g., create and affirm management goals and objectives through a transparent, fair, and inclusive public process).
- Establish strong, clear lines of decision-making and performance standards (e.g., timely, comprehensive reporting).

## THEME 4: INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION

**RECOMMENDATION 13: Create community-wide, awareness-raising programs that build a stewardship ethic across generations and sectors.**

### ACTIONS

#### COMMUNITY

#### GOVERNMENT

- Incorporate environmental education (with a focus on stewardship) into the Ministry of Education's prescribed learning outcomes, as detailed in individual provincial/territorial curriculum.

#### GOVERNMENT AND COMMUNITY

- Increase public understanding of the importance of watershed stewardship and of existing watershed programs, and demonstrate why communities should become watershed stewards (e.g., explain that all things in a natural system are connected).

**RECOMMENDATION 14: Create transparent and accessible mechanisms to make information from many different knowledge bases, available to all interested parties.**

### ACTIONS

#### COMMUNITY

#### GOVERNMENT

- Provide funding to collect baseline information and to place it in an appropriate digital format available for broad use.

#### GOVERNMENT AND COMMUNITY

- Provide regular, updated reports (for example, State of the Basin Reports) that outline the status, cumulative effects, thresholds, and limits of watersheds.
- Support the creation of a central clearing house for watershed information exchange.

**RECOMMENDATION 15: Produce a comprehensive national communications strategy with an implementation plan and adequate funding.**

**ACTIONS**

**COMMUNITY**

- Develop local communication plans, consistent with a national communication strategy to ensure community staff (e.g. NGO staff), and volunteers receive a consistent message about activities and programs in their watershed.
- A local communication strategy must be accompanied by an implementation strategy and funding to support implementation.

**GOVERNMENT**

- Develop a national communication strategy that includes internal communication (for example, effective processes to deliver clear and consistent messages to government staff and among government departments) and external (e.g., effective processes to deliver clear and consistent messages to the public).
- The national communication strategy must be accompanied by an implementation strategy and funding to support implementation by government staff and local community partners.

**RECOMMENDATION 16: Provide sufficient tools, resources, and support to understand how human behaviours influence natural resources, and to engage in the work required to effect change.**

**ACTIONS**

**COMMUNITY**

- Build capacity to use stewardship marketing tools and techniques.
- Ensure that codes of practices within community organizations are encouraging stewardship behaviour.

**GOVERNMENT**

- Provide financial support for the development and use of stewardship marketing tools and techniques.
- Ensure that codes of practices within government agencies are encouraging stewardship behaviour.

**GOVERNMENT AND COMMUNITY**

- Establish a monitoring body to examine media messages from community groups, industry, government, and quasi-government to ensure that the public receives appropriate messages to promote stewardship behaviour.
- Collect socio-economic data to evaluate indicators of successful, long-term behavioural change. Data could range from broad surveys across many populations, to small focus groups with specific audiences.

## THEME 5: PARTNERSHIPS

**RECOMMENDATION 17: Create opportunities for and sustain collaborative partnerships toward a common vision with shared decision-making, risk taking, investment, and benefit.**

### ACTIONS

#### COMMUNITY

#### GOVERNMENT

- Develop incentives for cooperation to overcome institutional barriers (e.g., flexibility in mandates, coordination within and among departments/ministries).

#### GOVERNMENT AND COMMUNITY

- Develop partnerships that create common vision, shared interests, resource commitments, and collaborative methods of decision making, goal setting, and carrying out of roles and responsibilities.
- Support the capacity of local government to implement policies.
- Create opportunities to actively engage industry (including forestry, mining, energy, and agriculture) in decision-making within watersheds.
- Create opportunities to actively engage aboriginal communities in decision-making within watersheds.
- Collaborate on developing Memorandums of Understanding (MOU's) that specify such things as, governance, priorities, management structure, joint workplan development, and conflict resolution protocols.

**RECOMMENDATION 18: Create opportunities for and support watershed stewardship groups that include all relevant parties (e.g., all levels of government, aboriginal communities, educational institutions, industry, and youth).**

### ACTIONS

#### GOVERNMENT AND COMMUNITY

- Conduct directed outreach programs to encourage partnerships.
- Align with all orders of government, especially municipalities, to build a common vision for individual watersheds.
- Ensure that governing/managing bodies, such as a board of directors, represent a range of relevant interests, backgrounds, and expertise.

## THEME 6: VOLUNTEERS

**RECOMMENDATION 19: Provide volunteer stewards and stewardship groups with support to maintain momentum and produce successful, long-term initiatives.**

### ACTIONS

#### COMMUNITY

- Address liability issues for volunteer groups. Learn from other groups (e.g., Streamkeepers in BC) that have overcome this barrier.

#### GOVERNMENT

- Develop and back environmentally sound measures that allow individuals to correct ecological problems on their land (e.g., financial and tax incentives and agri-environmental payments).<sup>22</sup>
- In partnership with other agencies, provide technical and administrative support and training to volunteer groups.
- Ensure grant money is in place before a project starts.
- Ensure agency staff are accessible to stewardship groups to provide technical assistance and advice

**RECOMMENDATION 20: Honour volunteers by publicly recognizing, celebrating, and rewarding their efforts and accomplishments.**

### ACTIONS

#### GOVERNMENT AND COMMUNITY

- Design and implement volunteer recognition and reward mechanisms.

## THEME 7: MONITORING AND EVALUATION

**RECOMMENDATION 21: Include monitoring and evaluation, as part of program/project design and development.**

<b>ACTIONS</b>	
<b>COMMUNITY</b>	<b>GOVERNMENT</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide the necessary tools for assessment and interpretation of monitoring data so that results are used to adaptively manage program delivery and implementation.</li> </ul>
<b>GOVERNMENT AND COMMUNITY</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish comprehensive participatory monitoring and evaluation frameworks with a clearly defined purpose and target audience.</li> <li>Establish and use effective baseline snapshots, benchmarks, watershed health-criteria, and indicators.</li> <li>Include social, ecological, and economic indicators to measure progress. Where appropriate, indicators should be verified through quantitative and qualitative data.</li> <li>Emphasize that the participatory process used to evaluate is as important as the final outcome of the evaluation.</li> </ul>	

**RECOMMENDATION 22: Build on existing approaches to provide consistent methods of monitoring and evaluation.**

<b>ACTIONS</b>	
<b>COMMUNITY</b>	<b>GOVERNMENT</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide a usable, centralized, accessible data-base, delivered on a watershed basis. The data-base should recognize the diverse information and data needs of community groups.</li> </ul>
<b>GOVERNMENT AND COMMUNITY</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide ongoing training in the use of monitoring and evaluation tools and results to improve and build on existing programs and to ensure consistency.</li> <li>Provide assistance to groups to conduct inventories, monitoring, and analysis of, and reporting on, watershed resources.</li> <li>Provide information in a GIS-format to allow for watershed-based data collection but recognize that not all community members are able to interpret GIS data.</li> </ul>	

## NEXT STEPS

The next phase of this initiative will involve communicating and implementing the recommendations and activities described in this report. The phase involves six strategic priorities.

### 1. Implementing recommendations among government agencies

In September 2003, the National Watershed Stewardship Steering Committee drafted letters to relevant federal and provincial ministries to inform them of this initiative and to request a meeting to discuss the implementation of government actions. For the next 4 months, the Steering Committee will follow up on this correspondence by arranging meetings with ministers and departmental staff.

### 2. Implementing actions with regional organizations

Regional partners are currently building commitment and support for community actions through the strengthening of regional stewardship networks. For example, in early 2004 Alberta, British Columbia, and Ontario will hold stewardship network meetings.

### 3. Strengthening partnerships

Recognizing the unique role that aboriginal communities have to play in watershed stewardship and governance in Canada, the National Watershed Stewardship Committee is interested in strengthening aboriginal partnerships. Partnerships with industry (including forestry, mining, energy, and agriculture), municipal, and territorial governments are also being explored.

### 4. Building on other relevant stewardship initiatives

There are many national stewardship programs across different sectors and departments that support the National Watershed Stewardship recommendations. The National Watershed Stewardship Committee would like to build on these initiatives, some of which include:

- The **Canadian Biodiversity Strategy** is Canada's response to the United Nation's Convention on Biodiversity. The National Watershed Stewardship Committee would like to collaborate with Environment Canada as they develop the fourth priority of this strategy: engaging Canadians through biodiversity stewardship;
- The **Landscape Management Coalition** emerged from the National Landscape Management Workshop, April 2003. Landscape management and watershed stewardship share a common commitment to promoting an integrated, whole-system approach to planning, conservation, and management. The National Watershed Stewardship Committee supports the coalition's efforts to advance landscape management in Canada;
- Recommendations arising from the **Conference on Canadian Wetlands Stewardship** in February 2003, will soon be produced and will likely align with many of the watershed stewardship recommendations discussed in this report;
- The **National Forest Strategy** (2003-2008) charts the direction that Canadians, as stewards of the forest, need to take to achieve sustainable forest management. The National Watershed Stewardship Committee supports the strategy's emphasis on ecosystem-based management and community participation; and
- The **National Programme of Action (NPA)** for the Protection of Marine Environment from Land-based Activities outlines a strategy based on co-operative action among federal,

provincial, and territorial governments. The NPA is focused on protecting the marine environment through pollution prevention and integrated management of activities within the coastal zone. These strategies align closely with the recommendations discussed in the *National Watershed Stewardship Report*.

In addition, several initiatives are underway that support the development of a co-ordinated approach to stewardship programs and activities across Canada. The National Watershed Stewardship Committee supports these initiatives, some of which include:

- The **Leading Edge (LE) Steering Committee** was established to organize the *Leading Edge Conference: Stewardship and Conservation in Canada*, July 2003. Members of the National Watershed Steering Committee are represented on the LE Committee and the two committees are collaborating to compile recommendations from the conference. The recommendations will be used to establish a long-term vision to advance and strengthen stewardship in Canada;
- The **Federal-Provincial-Territorial Stewardship Working Group** was established to advance *Canada's Stewardship Agenda*. The Group has representatives from all provinces and territories, as well as eight federal departments. The National Watershed Stewardship Committee would like to collaborate with this initiative to further the Priority Actions of *Canada's Stewardship Agenda*;
- The **National Roundtable Table on the Environment and Economy** (NRTEE) produced a report entitled: *The state of the debate on the environment and economy: Securing Canada's natural capital*. The report recommends the establishment of a Conservation Council and Conservation Fund that would guide and support conservation priorities over the next ten years.
- **Canada's Stewardship Portal** offers a valuable communication tool to advance stewardship in Canada. The National Watershed Stewardship Committee is collaborating with the co-ordinators of the portal to communicate the results of this project and to encourage broader participation in stewardship activities.

The authors of this report are committed to strengthening these linkages, to the extent possible and practical, and to share our experience and efforts to ensure coordinated stewardship action.

## 5. Stewardship Task Force

The National Watershed Stewardship Committee recommends the establishment of a joint Stewardship Task Force (STF), built on existing and emerging stewardship initiatives. As a first step, a budget needs to be drafted detailing the resources and support required to establish this task force. Once established, the task force would be responsible for:

- Establishing a common stewardship vision and strategy;
- Costing out what would be required to implement this vision; and
- Recommending roles and responsibilities for delivering stewardship programs.

## 6. Investing in Stewardship

The STF could assist in establishing appropriate mechanisms to increase co-ordination and efficiency among current stewardship investments. This may include the establishment of a National Stewardship and Conservation Fund (as recommended in the NRTEE report) that will provide ongoing support and expansion of stewardship activities on a project-by-project basis.

## **DEFINITIONS**

### **Accountability**

Accountability means ensuring that decision-makers take into account and act upon the wants and needs of those who are affected by their decisions and that resources are used wisely and efficiently. This is most effectively guaranteed through transparent, fair, and inclusive decision-making and reporting processes.

### **Community**

There are several essential themes among the many definitions of community, including a grouping of people who reside in a specific locality (public space or geography), exercise some degree of local autonomy, and have shared social interactions (Lamoureux et al., 1989; Kahn, 199). A true interpretation of community often requires an understanding of the divergent interests of multiple actors within communities and how these actors affect decision-making (Agrawal, 1999, p. 640).

### **Conservation**

Conservation involves the sustainable use of the Earth's resources, by maintaining ecosystems, species, genetic diversity. Certain areas, species or populations may be excluded from human use as part of an overall conservation approach (Federal-Provincial-Territorial Stewardship Working Group, 2002).

### **Meaningful consultation**

Meaningful consultation involves the process of conferring with relevant individuals and groups before decisions are made that affect them. Meaningful consultation should be designed and endorsed by participants and should include the following aspects:

- Sufficient technical and financial support is available;
  - Relevant and accessible information is provided;
  - Adequate time is provided for responses;
  - Information is analyzed collaboratively;
  - Participants' ideas and concerns are reported and accounted for in the final product; and
  - Consultation process is periodically assessed and adjusted as needed.
- (Based on Nishnawbe Aski Nation, 2001; Silva Forest Foundation, 2000; and Smith, et al., 2000)

### **Partnerships**

Parties working together toward a common vision with shared decision making, shared risk taking, shared investment, and shared benefit.

### **Policy**

Policies are courses of action or principles. Policies are created, adopted, and used by governments, organizations, and individuals.

### **Stewardship**

The wide range of actions and activities of landholders, private companies, individual volunteers, communities, groups, organizations, and all levels of governments acting alone or in partnership, to

promote, monitor, and conserve biodiversity, to develop and use all natural resources in a sustainable manner, and to maintain the ecosystems on which life depends. Stewardship is also defined as: “An ethic by which Canadians care for our land, water, and air as parts of a natural life-support system and act to sustain and enhance it for generations to come.” (Based on Federal-Provincial-Territorial Stewardship Working Group, 2002).

### **Strategic Approach**

A strategic approach refers to a method of analysis for achieving a defined goal or objective that uses a “big picture” perspective. The result of the strategic analysis, such as a plan, is believed to be the most effective means of achieving the desired end point and responding to an identified challenge or problem. A strategic approach should place the organization or initiative in a position where it is capable of responding effectively to changes in the operating environment.

### **Sustainable Use**

Using social, economic, and environmental resources in a way that maintains the potential to meet the needs and aspirations of present and future generations (Based on Federal-Provincial-Territorial Stewardship Working Group, 2002).

### **Watershed**

A watershed is defined as an area of land bounded by topographic features and height of land that drains waters, through a stream and its tributaries to a shared destination. A watershed also captures precipitation, filters, and stores water, and determines its release. Watersheds vary in size. Every waterway (stream, tributary, etc) has an associated watershed, and smaller watersheds join together to become larger watersheds (National Roundtable on the Environment and Economy 2003 p. 103).

### **Watershed stewardship**

Watershed stewardship is focused on promoting, monitoring, and conserving the ecological health and biodiversity of a watershed unit. Since watersheds often span across many jurisdictional boundaries (e.g., of governments, of agencies, and of organizations), effective watershed stewardship requires strong collaboration among communities and all levels of government, leading to a co-ordinated governance system and integrated decision-making among environmental, economic, and social interests.

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## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> The project was designed to solicit input from stewardship communities on Fisheries and Oceans Canada's Policy, specifically as it relates to the *Canada's Oceans Strategy*. The project supports the third goal of *Canada's Stewardship Agenda*: "Strengthen policy and legislative support for stewards, by providing the essential economic, policy, and legal tools and instruments required to support stewardship programs and activities."

<sup>2</sup> Watersheds come in nested sets. For example, when Canada undertook environmental planning to clean-up the Great Lakes, the Great Lakes Watershed system was selected as the appropriate scale. This level of watershed planning was completed in co-operation with the United States. However, action plans implemented to improve the environment of the great lakes watershed were set up on a smaller scale. Local agencies, such as conservation authorities, deliver these stewardship action plans on a watershed scale, but these smaller watersheds are also sub-units of the larger Great Lakes Watershed. The landholders, who participate in the implementation of action plans, co-ordinate activities at an even smaller, sub-watershed scale.

<sup>3</sup> Conservation Authorities completed a study that describes innovative approaches to watershed stewardship. These approaches include watershed reporting, watershed economic incentives, a framework for local water use decision-making, web-based communication for watershed information and watershed management. For more information see: <http://www.conservation-ontario.on.ca/projects/watershed.htm>.

<sup>4</sup> *Canada's Stewardship Agenda* is a plan for collaboration that proposed a national vision and operating principles for stewardship. The Agenda outlines four key goals, objectives for each goal and identifies a set of priority actions that recognize and empower stewards (Canadian Wildlife Service, 2002, p. 1).

<sup>5</sup> The *Agricultural Policy Framework* is advancing Environmental Farm Plans (EFP) as part of its national program. Under these programs, farmers voluntarily prepare plans that identify environmental concerns and set goals for improvement, often in return for a financial incentive (National Roundtable on the Environment and Economy, 2003 p. 74). For more information see: [http://www.agr.gc.ca/cb/apf/index\\_e.php](http://www.agr.gc.ca/cb/apf/index_e.php).

<sup>6</sup> *Canada's Ocean Strategy* is based on three pillars: sustainable development, the precautionary principle, and integrated management. The strategy seeks to promote stewardship and public awareness so that Canadians can actively participate in caring for our oceans in meaningful and positive ways (Fisheries and Oceans Canada, 2002a, p. vi). For more information see: [http://www.cos-soc.gc.ca/dir/cos-soc\\_e.asp](http://www.cos-soc.gc.ca/dir/cos-soc_e.asp).

<sup>7</sup> The *Species at Risk Act* authorizes cooperative agreements with landholders to conserve species at risk and their habitat. Other tools include stewardship action plans, land conservation easements, awards, and the ability to acquire land (Boyd, 2003 p. 184). For more information see: [http://www.sararegistry.gc.ca/the\\_act/default\\_e.cfm](http://www.sararegistry.gc.ca/the_act/default_e.cfm)

<sup>8</sup> One of the goals of the *Freshwater Fisheries Strategy* is to engage Canadians in the management and stewardship of freshwater fisheries, fish habitats, and aquatic ecosystems. The strategy acknowledges that freshwater fisheries and fish habitat management will be guided by an ecosystem approach (Fisheries and Oceans Canada, 2002b).

<sup>9</sup> Indian and Northern Affairs Canada are developing this strategy to promote the development of departmental environmental policies, directives, and procedures as well as enhancing environmental awareness and capacity training related to sound environmental management practices (Canadian Wildlife Services, 2003, p. 6).

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<sup>10</sup> In 1995 Canada signed the UN Global Programme of Action for the Protection of Marine Environment from Land-based Activities (GPA). Canada's implementation of the GPA is addressed through the National Programme of Action (NPA). The NPA outlined two strategies for protecting the marine environment from land-based activities: pollution prevention and integrated management of activities taking place in or affecting the coastal zone. For more information see: <http://www.npa-pan.ca/>.

<sup>11</sup> *Canada's National Forest Strategy* represents the collective vision and values of Canadians for the future of their forests. It has eight broad themes emphasizing ecosystem-based management and community engagement in achieving sustainable forest management (Canadian Wildlife Services, 2003, p. 12). For more information see <http://npsc.forest.ca/home.html>.

<sup>12</sup> The Report recommends a source protection system that includes "a strong planning component on an ecologically meaningful scale- that is, at the watershed level" (O'Connor, 2002). For more information see: <http://www.attorneygeneral.jus.gov.on.ca/english/about/pubs/walkerton/part2/>.

<sup>13</sup> Many of Canada's wetlands have disappeared, including 66 percent of Atlantic coastal marshes, 70 percent of Southern Ontario wetlands, 71 percent of Prairie wetlands, and 80 percent of the Fraser River delta (Boyd, 2003, p. 165).

<sup>14</sup> A recent study from Environment Canada concluded that as many as one in three Canadian species is not secure (Environment Canada, 2000).

<sup>15</sup> The total volume of fish caught in Canada fell 41 percent between 1990 and 2000. Atlantic salmon populations have fallen 85 percent since the 1960's (Boyd, 2003, p. 197). Total salmon returned to BC Rivers, although subject to natural fluctuations, are down by 80 to 90 percent since the turn of the century (Boyd, 2003, p. 199).

<sup>16</sup> A deadly strain of *E.coli* caused seven deaths and thousands of illness in Walkerton, Ontario. In addition 40 percent of the 1,300 rural wells in Ontario were found, in 1993, to have unacceptable levels of at least one of the chemical and microbiological contaminants that were measured (Health Canada, 1997).

<sup>17</sup> 90 percent of logging in Canada still occurs in old-growth and primary forests, the intact forests with the highest biodiversity and wilderness values (Environment Canada, 1995).

<sup>18</sup> Less than one third of Canada's terrestrial natural regions are adequately or even moderately represented by protected areas (National Roundtable on the Environment and Economy, 2003, p. 103). Federally, 14 of Canada's 39 natural regions are not yet represented by a national park.

<sup>19</sup> The Sierra Legal Defence Fund, on behalf of a group of Canadian and American environmental groups, filed a complaint to the Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC) that Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) is failing to enforce environmental laws for logging operations in British Columbia. The report responding to the complaint was released in August 2003 and supported the claims that DFO is failing to protect fish habitat on privately logged lands. The report states that a lack of resources is DFO's main barrier to enforcement (Sierra Legal Defence Fund, 2003).

<sup>20</sup> For example, New York State was faced with drinking water problems due to pollution in the Catskill Delaware and Croton watersheds. They decided to invest in land acquisition, training, and incentives for landholders instead of installing a new filtration plant. The investment into stewardship cost them 1.5 billion compared with the 6-8 billion required to install a new filtration plant (National Roundtable on Environment and Economy, 2003, p. 10).

<sup>21</sup> The four priorities include, developing a biodiversity science agenda for Canada including a biological information management component; enhancing our capacity to monitor and report on the status and trends of biodiversity; addressing the threat of alien invasive species; and engaging Canadians through biodiversity stewardship (Environment Canada, 2003, Section 1-3.1).

<sup>22</sup> For example, use the Manitoba Alternative Land Use Service Project. For more information see: <http://www.kap.mb.ca/alus.htm>.

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## **APPENDIX 1: Description of the Consultation Process**

### **The Voluntary Sector Initiative (VSI) Project**

The VSI project engaged stewardship organizations across Canada in dialogue on watershed stewardship policy with Langley Environmental Partners Society (LEPS) as the coordinating organization.

### **The Key Participating Stewardship Organizations**

Beginning in March 2002, five watershed stewardship organizations, each representing a distinct Canadian region, were selected to implement the project: Langley Environmental Partners Society (LEPS; British Columbia), the Land Stewardship Centre (Alberta), Conservation Ontario (Ontario), the Comité ZIP Baie des Chaleurs, (Quebec), and the Clean Annapolis River Project (Nova Scotia). These groups were selected to represent a diversity of experience and range of perspectives on watershed stewardship in Canada. The project also benefited from the contributions of other stewardship organizations from across the country that provided input through regional workshops, surveys, on-line discussions, and the drafting of this final report. All groups share a similar commitment to watershed stewardship; their contributions are, and should continue to be, equally and fully valued.

### **Regional Consultations**

In early 2003, the stewardship organizations co-ordinated surveys and multi-party forums to collect information, promote dialogue, and generate ideas among communities, government, watershed stewardship groups, and individual stewards on lessons learned from watershed programs. Based on their results, each organization wrote a regional summary report detailing: a) factors of successful watershed stewardship programs; b) barriers to successful programs; and c) policy recommendations to improve watershed stewardship programs. Regional reports are available at [www.leps.bc.ca/website/vsi.htm](http://www.leps.bc.ca/website/vsi.htm).

### **On-line Policy Discussion Forum**

The five regional summary reports were posted to an on-line forum for discussion. Throughout May of 2003, on-line policy discussion were held to obtain broader input. The regional and national discussion forums can be viewed at: [www.stewardship2003.ca/forum/category-view.asp](http://www.stewardship2003.ca/forum/category-view.asp).

### **The National Watershed Stewardship Report**

During June of 2003, the information from the five regional summary reports and the on-line forums were incorporated into a draft national summary report. This draft document was presented to participants at the *National Watershed Stewardship Policy Forum* in Langley, B.C., July 1 - 3. The participants were representatives from the five regional organizations and other governmental and non-governmental organizations. Through the VSI funding, each of the five regional organization invited two volunteers engaged in on-the-ground stewardship. Based on feedback from the participants, the report was revised and presented to the *Leading Edge (LE) Conference: Stewardship and Conservation in Canada* in Victoria, July 3 - 6. Additional feedback on the document was encouraged at the LE Conference and through feedback on the LE and LEPS website during July and August, 2003.

## Common Lessons Learned

The participants involved in the VSI process valued the opportunity to share stewardship experiences from different parts of the country and feel that other groups from across Canada would benefit from further networking. During the development process and the face-to-face meetings, the participants were struck by the similarities of experience despite their geographical separation; i.e., stewards face remarkably common challenges across the country.

Figure 1: Summary of the National Watershed Stewardship Policy Discussion



## APPENDIX 2: Watershed Stewardship Partner Organizations

This project was completed in partnership with five watershed stewardship organizations from across Canada. Each organization selected a case study of a successful watershed stewardship program, and used workshops and surveys to compile a regional report on lessons learned from these programs.

### Pacific Region

Co-ordinating Organization: Langley Environmental Partners Society  
Contact Person: Aileen Anderson ([aanderson@tol.bc.ca](mailto:aanderson@tol.bc.ca))  
Website: [www.leps.bc.ca](http://www.leps.bc.ca)  
Watershed Stewardship Case Study: Habitat Conservation and Stewardship Program

Langley Environmental Partners Society (LEPS) is engaged in numerous watershed stewardship activities within the community of Langley, British Columbia. These activities include, stream mapping, habitat restoration, fencing, public education, tree planting, and watershed stewardship training. LEPS acted as the Community Partner for the Habitat Conservation and Stewardship Program (HCSP) for Langley, Surrey, and White Rock. HCSP represented a proactive approach to habitat protection that focused on developing local capacity in habitat conservation and stewardship. The program established a network of Stewardship Co-ordinators across the Pacific Region who supported, advised, and worked closely with community watershed stewardship groups, First Nations, and government agencies.

### Prairie Region

Co-ordinating Organization: Land Stewardship Centre of Canada (Alberta)  
Contact Person: Ernie Ewaschuk ([ernie@landstewardship.org](mailto:ernie@landstewardship.org))  
Website: [www.landstewardship.org](http://www.landstewardship.org)  
Watershed Stewardship Case Study: Watershed Stewardship organizations in Alberta, Manitoba and Saskatchewan

The vision of the Land Stewardship Centre of Canada's (LSCC) is a society that works together to maintain and enhance the health of landscapes for generations to come. Their mission is action-oriented, developing partnerships with agriculture, industry, governments, institutions, and communities. They seek to exchange knowledge and facilitate projects and programs that will serve the public in achieving stewardship goals and objectives. The LSCC has been involved in a number of watershed projects since its inception in 1996. The LSCC was founded as a cooperative effort of several organizations and has worked with many provincial and national organizations over the past seven years. In compiling the report for the Prairie region, the Land Stewardship Centre obtained input from successful watershed stewardship initiatives from Alberta, Manitoba, and Saskatchewan.

## Ontario Region

Co-ordinating Organization: Conservation Ontario  
Contact Person: Richard Hunter (dhunter@Conservation-Ontario.on.ca)  
Website: [www.conservation-ontario.ca](http://www.conservation-ontario.ca)  
Watershed Stewardship Case Study: Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority  
South Nation Conservation Authority

Conservation Authorities (CA's) were established in 1946 by an Act of the Provincial Legislature, with a mandate to ensure the conservation, restoration, and responsible management of Ontario's water, land, and natural habitats through programs that balance human, environmental, and economic needs. CA's are community-lead environmental organizations, operating with 36 watersheds. Conservation Authorities have experience in watershed planning, delivery of stewardship programs, working with volunteers, source protection planning, and delivery of programs through partnerships. The Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority (ABCA) and South Nation Conservation were chosen as case studies in this initiative.

## Quebec Region

Co-ordinating Organization: Comité ZIP Baie des Chaleurs  
Contact Person: Michel Chouinard (Mchouinard.bdc@globetrotter.net)  
Website: [www.slv2000.qc.ca/index\\_a.htm](http://www.slv2000.qc.ca/index_a.htm)  
Watershed Stewardship Case Study: ZIP Committee in the "Hortus Project"

Since 1991, fourteen ZIP (Zones d'intervention prioritaire) committees have been put in place as part of the St-Lawrence Vision 2000 Action Plan. The Zip Committees are supported by "Stratégies Saint-Laurent", a coordinating body responsible for encouraging community participation in the protection of the Saint-Lawrence River. Each ZIP committee is a multi-sectorial advisory board covering an "area of prime concern" (Zones d'intervention prioritaire). Comité ZIP Baie des Chaleurs has been active for the last 10 years and has built partners with a wide range of sectors involved in stewardship. Its area covers a 350 km stretch of coastline along the southern part of the Gaspé peninsula in eastern Quebec.

## Atlantic Region

Co-ordinating Organization: Clean Annapolis River Project  
Contact Person: Steve Hawboldt (carp@annapolisriver.ca)  
Website: [www.annapolisriver.ca](http://www.annapolisriver.ca)  
Watershed Stewardship Case Study: Atlantic Coastal Action Program

The Clean Annapolis River Project (CARP) is a charitable, community-owned corporation created to work with the community and interested organizations to foster the conservation, restoration, and sustainable use of the freshwater and marine ecosystems of southwestern Nova Scotia's Annapolis River and its watershed. Since 1991, CARP has participated in Environment Canada's Atlantic Coastal Action Program (ACAP). CARP has been involved in over 100 projects related to volunteer water quality monitoring, fish habitat restoration, public education, coastal management, private stewardship initiatives, sustainable agriculture, and pollution prevention.

## APPENDIX 3: Actions of secondary importance for implementation

### RECOMMENDATION 9: Support the development of a national coalition/network of watershed stewardship organizations.

<b>ACTIONS</b>	
<b>COMMUNITY</b>	<b>GOVERNMENT</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Network and build relationships across and among communities</li> <li>• Invite smaller groups together with a common goal or idea to facilitate representation or a stronger advocacy role.</li> </ul>	

### RECOMMENDATION 10: Develop and implement policies and guidelines to deliver watershed planning and programs.

<b>ACTIONS</b>	
<b>COMMUNITY</b>	<b>GOVERNMENT</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create ongoing multi-party forums for dialogue and information sharing, and to get citizens' messages voices to top politicians.</li> <li>• Assist communities to present their ideas and recommendations to governments in a results-based manner.</li> <li>• Ensure that policies and programs are implemented and driven by local communities.</li> <li>• Provide a "safe" forum and process for addressing misunderstandings and conflict.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide policy direction to watershed stewardship organizations through provincial/territorial water strategies acts, industry codes of practice, and best management practices.</li> <li>• In Ontario, deliver stewardship programs on a watershed basis through conservation authorities (ensures coordinated delivery on an ecological basis, according to an overall plan).</li> <li>• Implement strategies like the Quebec Water Policy that provides a framework to simplify the work of stewardship groups.</li> <li>• Streamline approvals to speed up program delivery.</li> </ul>
<b>GOVERNMENT AND COMMUNITY</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish flexible programs and policies that are customized to reflect the diversity of groups, local needs, and opportunities.</li> <li>• Support the integration of watershed stewardship with broader initiatives, e.g., global warming, eco-forestry, preventative health care environmental quality, environmental services, cultural preservation.</li> <li>• Assist with the implementation of local by-laws designed to improve the protection of sensitive ecosystems.</li> </ul>	

**RECOMMENDATION 11: Establish and maintain long-term, multi-party watershed governance bodies (e.g., all-party committees, joint management boards, and boards of directors).**

**ACTIONS**

**COMMUNITY**

- Demonstrate to governments that local citizens are capable of caring for and managing local watersheds.
- Assist in the training and mentoring of community groups to increase their capacity for governing their watersheds.

**GOVERNMENT**

- Delegate more on-the-ground decisions, such as water taking permits, from federal provincial, or territorial ministries or departments to local governance body.
- Ensure government agencies provide technical expertise, funding, information, and political commitment to the governing bodies of community groups.
- Examine laws in Washington State regarding watershed planning and local community management. Determine the feasibility of use in Canada.

**GOVERNMENT AND COMMUNITY**

- Create governance structures that are clear, simple, and that evolve to serve needed functions.
- Ensure members of a governance body are knowledgeable in environmental issues and have appropriate technical expertise or receive timely and sufficient training in required areas.
- Provide opportunity for “ex-officio” member status for government representatives.
- Identify a core, representative group who will decide the roles, status, and responsibilities of all members of the governing body

**RECOMMENDATION 12: Ensure accountability of watershed policy and programs.**

**ACTIONS**

**COMMUNITY**

**GOVERNMENT**

- Guarantee the even application of current laws and use enforcement fairly where required.

**GOVERNMENT AND COMMUNITY**

- Use real cost (full cost) accounting when reporting on environmental services during policy and decision-making processes.
- Clearly articulate how public comments are responded to.
- Create checks and balances on program processes and activities that still allow for sufficient flexibility and autonomy to ensure efficiency and responsiveness.
- Monitor and report on government actions to ensure that they carry through on commitments and follow their own rules.
- Create a clear and consistent link between the roles and responsibilities of stewardship partners and the visions, goals, and objectives of associated programs (i.e., with the program’s desired outcomes).
- Use MOUs among stewardship partners that are not restrictive, but that give everyone a clear understanding of what’s expected.

**RECOMMENDATION 14: Create transparent and accessible mechanisms to make relevant information from many different knowledge bases, available to all interested parties.**

**ACTIONS**

**COMMUNITY ACTIONS**

- Assist government staff in understanding how community groups function and operate.

**GOVERNMENT ACTIONS**

- Provide information to citizens on how the government policy and decision-making processes function.

**GOVERNMENT AND COMMUNITY**

- Support information sharing programs.
- Involve citizens in the collection of watershed information.
- Use common, accessible terminology, and provide information in a user-friendly format by identifying target audiences.
- Plan for regular meetings between government and concerned parties to ensure a good flow of information.
- Prioritize what information needs to be collected and for what purposes.

**RECOMMENDATION 15: Produce a comprehensive national communications strategy with an implementation plan and adequate funding.**

**ACTIONS**

**COMMUNITY**

- Carry out monitoring and evaluation of local strategies. The results should be used to improve the delivery of all internal and external communications.

**GOVERNMENT**

- Carry out monitoring and evaluation of the national strategy. The results should be used to improve the delivery of all internal and external communications.
- Ensure the national strategy provides training in marketing and communications, and media training for key program volunteers.
- Create linkages and consistency between government and community communications programs.

**RECOMMENDATION 19: Provide volunteer stewards and stewardship groups with support to maintain momentum and produce successful, long-term initiatives.**

**ACTIONS**

**COMMUNITY**

**GOVERNMENT**

- Encourage Revenue Canada to develop mechanisms to encourage volunteerism and the donation of environmental goods and services (e.g., capital gains incentives).

**RECOMMENDATION 20: Honour volunteers by publicly recognizing, celebrating, and rewarding their efforts and accomplishments.**

**ACTIONS**

**GOVERNMENT AND COMMUNITY**

- Value and encourage volunteer involvement from many generations and diverse sectors (e.g., youth, industry, landowners, landholders).

**RECOMMENDATION 21: Include monitoring and evaluation, as part of program/project design and development.**

**ACTIONS**

**COMMUNITY**

**GOVERNMENT**

- Ensure government departments and agencies make monitoring data available to partners and the general public.

**GOVERNMENT AND COMMUNITY**

- Include monitoring and reporting in funding program formulas.
- Ensure monitoring and evaluation processes follow the principles of transparency, inclusiveness, shared responsibility, consistency, and continuity.
- Determine both the kinds and sources of information needed to monitor and evaluate the program.
- Track and report on ecological, social, economic, and organizational changes resulting from the project.
- Communicate the value, benefits, processes, and purposes of evaluations to partners.
- Ensure reporting requirements meet accountability and information sharing objectives, but are not onerous.
- Ensure individuals with appropriate skills or training lead evaluations.