

Volunteer Environmental Stewardship and Climate Change: Building Capacity to Meet the Challenges Ahead

A Brief to the Select Standing Committee on Finance and
Government Services

The Stewardship Centre for British Columbia Society

October 2007

A. Issue/Problem:

British Columbian communities need to be engaged in shared environmental stewardship in order to mitigate the effects of climate change on their local natural environment that they depend upon and enjoy. Volunteer community-based environmental stewardship groups are an essential component in engaging our communities in shared environmental stewardship.

The capacity of community-based stewardship groups to adequately respond to local environmental needs, including the effects of climate change on their communities, is limited by their ability to access core operating funds. For these groups to be healthy and effective partners in addressing the new challenges related to climate change, they require a mechanism to guarantee sustainable operational funding, and they require support for regional coordination.

B. Solution:

We recommend that a permanently endowed \$25 million **Stewardship Works! Trust** be established to help provide a mechanism to sustain and coordinate community non-profit volunteer groups working on local environmental issues. We suggest 2 separate but complementary accounts to invest annual interest from the endowment:

B.1 The Sustaining Account would provide small core funding grants to local stewardship groups. It would be modeled after the B.C. Arts Renaissance Fund used by government in partnership with the Vancouver Foundation to create an endowment building mechanism to help sustain local nonprofit volunteer groups in arts and culture. Appendix 1 has more information on the success of the B.C. Arts Renaissance Fund.

B.2 The Coordination Account would provide matching grants for the coordination of community-based stewardship groups working in the same geographic area. It would

build on lessons learned from the former Habitat and Conservation Stewardship Program that was funded by the Federal Government and similar programs that were funded by Fisheries Renewal B.C.

C. How Does This Proposal Fit the Provincial Government's Agenda?

C.1 The Stewardship Works! Trust is consistent with the Premier's Service Plan.

"Lead the world in sustainable environmental management, with the best air and water quality, and the best fisheries management, bar none."

C.2 The Stewardship Works! Trust complements the Ministry of Environment's Service Plan.

"To be successful, we have increased our emphasis on fostering stewardship and collaborative approaches to environmental management. This approach will increase our capacity to ensure that the quality of water, land and air is maintained, and that we have a greater role in the stewardship of ocean and marine resources. We are expanding our relationships with governments (federal, provincial, local), First Nations, the private sector, communities and citizens".

C.3 The Stewardship Works! Trust could be a Public Private Partnership.

This proposal is consistent with recent actions by the Government of B.C. to create new societies and trusts to achieve collaborative approaches to environmental management. This innovative P3 policy involves the establishment of independent nonprofit societies or small management committees to guide investments in the environment. These organizations have a number of common characteristics:

- endowment or guaranteed cash flow;
- money held in trust outside of government;
- joint governance by stakeholders and government; and
- leverage of investment encouraged and expected.

Examples include:

1. The Living Rivers Trust Fund (2002)

Administered by a 6 member Advisory Group of non-government, government and First Nations representatives, Living Rivers uses existing processes and partnerships to deliver and lever investments in rivers, watersheds and fish habitats over 5 years from \$21 million held in trust by the Vancouver Foundation. To date, major investments have been made in the Fraser Salmon and Watershed Program (with a \$10 million match from Fisheries and Oceans Canada) and the Georgia Basin Steelhead Recovery Program. The Advisory Group includes one representative from the Province of B.C.

2. The Freshwater Fisheries Society (2003)

This independent non-profit society under contract with the province receives approximately \$7 million or 54% of the revenue generated by the sale of freshwater angling licenses annually. In return it operates fish hatchery facilities, stocks about 800 public lakes and streams, promotes sport fishing and provides public information and education services. It also works with governments and other partners to conserve and restore wild fish populations. The 6 person Board is comprised of 4 independent members and 2 appointed by the province.

3. The B.C. Trust for Public Lands (2004)

This trust is managed by a committee is comprised of representatives of non-government and government entities that specialize in the acquisition and management of private land to protect biodiversity values. This funding will result in increased habitat conservation and green space ensuring that the highest priority sites in British Columbia are identified and that the best long-term conservation investments are made. A one time grant of \$8 million held in trust provides annual draw down revenue over 5 years. Revenues are matched by partners at a 3:1 ratio. The 10 member committee includes one representative from each of the provincial and federal governments.

4. The Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation (2007)

An independent non-profit society appointed under provisions of the *Wildlife Act* to invest annual proceeds of approximately \$5 million from surcharges on angling, hunting and trapping licences on the protection, maintenance and enhancement of fish and wildlife and their habitats. The 10 member Board of Directors includes two representatives from the Province.

None of the four P3s described above focuses on capacity building and coordination issues related to community-based stewardship groups. Some have limited resources to invest in stewardship projects.

The proposed Stewardship Works! Trust could be established as a P3 to complement the environmental work of those P3 entities described above.

D. What is Stewardship?

Stewardship is an ethic and practice to carefully and responsibly manage natural resources and ecosystems for the benefit of current and future generations.

Governments at the national, provincial, and local levels all have varying mandates to establish and enforce standards and regulations for the protection of the environment. They not only encourage voluntary compliance with regulations, laws and policies but they also promote the concept of shared stewardship.

Shared stewardship encourages everyone to care for the land and environment. It is an “attitude and a commitment to act in an environmentally, socially and economically sustainable manner”

(Wilkin, 2006). Shared stewardship is shared responsibility for the environment. It is a partnership.

Appendix 2 describes the role of governments in promoting shared stewardship partnerships.

E. What is the Link between Stewardship and Climate Change?

Wilson (2007) states that:

“Current and future climate change will have an impact on forests, wetlands, fresh water ecosystems and marine ecosystems.

Given that climate change will continue to exert pressure on ecosystems throughout this century, protection for remaining intact natural ecosystems areas and careful planning for land use will provide corridors, enabling plants and animals to adapt and migrate as the climate changes...”

Climate change will affect all sectors and interests. Together, we will be challenged to “*consider strategies and actions that will mitigate climate change, protect and enhance potential carbon sinks, and promote and support healthy functioning natural ecosystems so that they can adapt to the rapid changes in climate and environment.*”

Community-based stewardship groups are essential in engaging our communities in shared stewardship. They are the front line workers at the local level to implement important strategies and actions to mitigate the effects of climate change.

F. What is the Focus of Voluntary Community-Based Stewardship Groups?

Community-based stewardship groups maintain British Columbia’s biodiversity by increasing the resiliency of ecosystems to adapt to change. These groups are engaged in a full suite of local activities that care for land, air and water, and sustain the natural processes on which life depends. They play a range of interconnected roles, including education, landowner contact, habitat and species restoration, research, advocacy, clean-ups, land acquisition, water and species monitoring and networking. They vary in size and work on a variety of scales. The benefits of a healthy natural environment are improved community and individual health.

A large portion of the estimated 800 community-based groups in the province focus on shared stewardship. These include, but are not limited to, streamkeepers, wetlandkeepers, local land trusts, naturalists clubs, rod and gun clubs, watershed groups, parks organizations and others. Over the past decade, these groups have increasing expertise,

capacity, and activity levels, are taking on work formerly done by government, and are implementing measures directly through hands-on projects. They are “the legs on the ground” and the community leaders promoting shared stewardship and sustainability. Appendix 3 provides some examples of projects and describes the environmental and economical contributions of local stewardship groups.

Groups use a number of strategies to fund local activities. These include memberships, project grants, donations, lotteries, fee for services and bequests. Project grants are probably the most common. Governments and foundations are major sources of project grants and each granting program has rules and regulations that govern its investments. This creates a complex world of jurisdictions, funding silos, partnership requirements, deadlines, format and content rules and reporting requirements. In British Columbia, this is further complicated by the fact that the Federal Government has fiduciary obligations for anadromous fish and from time to time provides monies and programs to support those obligations. But because all watersheds in the province do not have salmon present, not all areas can benefit from funding for salmon projects.

Groups are faced with the fact that project funding may not be consistent over time, may be restricted to an area, may be restricted to a species, and/or may be restricted to an activity.

Groups are also faced with the fact that government and non-government funders alike focus mainly on projects and simply assume that a small percentage in each project grant used for administration will sustain local organizations. Understandably, funders are reluctant and unable to create long-term dependencies in support of core operational funding.

The challenge for community-based stewardship groups is to identify the local actions that require attention and secure funding for projects from the maze of funders, augment that with donated cash, goods and services from local businesses while maintaining the interest and commitment from a strong team of volunteers to do the work. The effectiveness of the groups is often linked to the amount of project money received and the health or capacity of the groups is often linked to the amount of administration support provided by that project money.

The Stewardship Works! Trust would promote healthy groups, streamline their administration, and simplify their operations to allow for more attention to be paid to “on the ground” activities.

G. What can Stewardship Groups do to further the Climate Change Agenda?

Stewardship groups are found all across the province in both rural and urban settings and are thus well positioned to greatly assist governments with the implementation of climate change activities. Governments have repeatedly stressed that they do not bear sole responsibility to find solutions and there must be efforts made to address the problem at every level of society.

Stewardship groups can serve in many cases as the local eyes, ears, legs and voice to help governments in a wide variety of stewardship related activities. Some examples are:

- Water conservation through stream enhancement and clean-up projects.
- Restoration of forest and grassland parcels and game animal habitats to assist in carbon sequestration.
- Participation on Recovery Teams in recovery programs for species impacted by climate change.
- Monitoring various ecological parameters (i.e., weather stations, water gauges) on an on-going basis to detect the impacts of climate change and the effect of remedial actions.
- Providing leadership, local focus and logistical support for educational activities related to climate change.
- Serving as an effective conduit for networking ideas, training programs, announcements and information.
- Serving as a reservoir of local knowledge to assist government in the design and execution and monitoring of research projects related to climate change.
- Advocacy and spokespeople for governments' climate change agenda at the local level.
- Liaison with local farmers, loggers, developers to promote more sustainable ways of doing business.

Climate change will challenge all sectors of society. The visible work of local groups in the community will perhaps be one of the few positive aspects of meeting those challenges.

H. What are the Existing Impediments to Improving the Effectiveness of Stewardship Groups?

Appendix 4 describes the volunteers sector in the province and the recent plight of volunteer environmental stewardship groups. There is overwhelming evidence that lack of core operational funding is a serious barrier to the effectiveness of local groups. Here is an example of a recent survey:

On surveying 100 community-based stewardship groups in B.C., Smailes (2004) reported that, due to the erosion of (project) funders, the volunteer stewardship sector in the province was on the "brink of a crisis" that required immediate government action for core funding, utilizing coordinated funding arrangements with partners, longer-term funding programs and financing arrangements. *"The results of the survey reveal the enormous energy, vision, creativity and dedication of a relatively small group of individuals in our province who are truly guardians of our natural heritage. Their value to us as citizens of this province and country and to the environment cannot be underestimated. The surveyors were struck over and over again by how much groups had accomplished invariably with more cooperation, savvy and determination than with large budgets. At the same time, it is apparent that organizations have developed enormous*

capacity. However, they are not able to reach their full potential due to lack of access to appropriate funding and support.”

I. How Have Other Jurisdictions Addressed This Core Funding Barrier?

Ontario

Ontario is a leader in recognizing the importance of providing long-term core funding and dedicating government staff to support volunteer stewardship work. Ontario Stewardship is a model developed by the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources to improve stewardship of its natural resources. The program has created a new relationship with communities, found better efficiencies, unexpected alliances, and most importantly illustrated the tremendous value of true partnerships. It operates on private lands in the southern portion of the province (about 40% of the province where 90% of the human population resides). No Crown land is involved.

Now in its 11th year Ontario Stewardship has an annual budget of over \$4 million. It provides an annual core (operational) funding grant of about \$10,000 to each of 42 regional stewardship councils that annually levers about \$21 million for stewardship work. Councils are geographically linked with Counties (like Regional Districts in B.C.) and provide a forum to foster stewardship, influence responsible land care by landowners and land interests, and seek funding opportunities to support their initiatives.

The strength for this approach is that it involves a government coordinator and specific geographical boundaries for coordinated works. The weakness is that it currently deals only with private lands and there is only direct capacity building support for coordination of groups rather than direct capacity building support for individual groups.

Alberta

The provincial government has recently provided funding to the Alberta Stewardship Network to provide grants of up to \$10K per year for core operating funds to watershed stewardship groups.

Under Water for Life: Alberta’s Strategy for Sustainability, the Government of Alberta (GOA) and its partners recognize the tremendous grassroots effort found in communities across the province to care for watersheds and water resources.

The strength of this approach is that it helps groups build capacity. The weakness is that it focuses only on water and there is no guarantee that funding will be sustained.

J. What Has B.C. Done to Address the Core Funding Barrier?

There is currently work underway to try and quantify the benefits of providing small grants to support core operational funding of stewardship groups. *Stewardship Works!* is a program that was first proposed in 2006 by the Stewardship Centre for BC and the

Ministry of Environment's Healthy Ecosystems Healthy People Act Now project to help address the known core funding barrier that community-based stewardship groups currently experience. On May 23, 2007, representatives of funding partners, governments and stewardship groups participated in a workshop to have input into the design of a "made for B.C." program that proposed to provide multi-year core operational funding grants to strengthen local stewardship groups. The workshop report is in Appendix 5.

An evaluation framework is being developed and it is expected that the first of two annual grants of up to \$5K will be made to each of 9 groups around the province by December 31. Our goal is to quantify the impacts of providing core operational funding grants over the next 2 years. This development and testing work is kindly supported by the Ministry of Environment, the Healthy Ecosystems Healthy People Act Now Project, and the Fraser Salmon and Watershed Program - a partnership between the Pacific Salmon Foundation and The Fraser Basin Council that is funded by the Living Rivers Trust Fund and Fisheries and Oceans Canada.

K. How Would Annual Revenue From the \$25 Million Stewardship Works! Trust Be Used?

We propose that the Stewardship Centre for B.C. Society, an independent non-profit with a Board of Directors comprised of government and non-government Directors, be responsible for investing the annual revenue from the endowment as outlined in a trust agreement from the Province (Appendix 6 provides information about the society). That agreement would describe terms and conditions including expenditure limits for administration, matching grants to establish operational endowments and matching grants to support coordination. Here are some initial thoughts on the focus of the agreement:

The Sustaining Account (65% of Annual Revenue)

The endowment matching account would provide community-based stewardship groups in all regions of the province with the mechanism to achieve operational sustainability. It will assist groups to build permanent endowment funds so that income generated will provide annual operational revenues to maintain and build capacity. This would increase the ability of community-based stewardship groups to attract, train and maintain volunteers, to coordinate activities, and to plan projects. They would still apply to governments, foundations, industry and private donors to seek money for projects, but they would be better at planning their projects resulting in better project delivery, reporting and evaluation because of improved organizational capacity and financial stability.

Matching grants would be "colour blind" as to the focus of the work of the applicant group. A group working on salmon would have the same opportunity as group working on mountain sheep. A group working on a watershed would have the same opportunity as a group working on grasslands. The ability to raise money to match the endowment grant and nonprofit status as a registered society would be basic requirements.

This proposal builds on the proven funding model used by the B.C Renaissance Arts Fund to help sustain nonprofit groups in arts and culture.

Example: A local group raises \$25K from community sources and receives a match from this account of the Stewardship Works! Trust. The total of \$50K is placed in trust and the annual interest from that trust account flows to the local group to help with core operational costs. This could be repeated over several years to grow the endowment.

Are existing groups capable of raising money to create local endowments when that same money could be used by the groups in order to survive? Probably not many as most groups are currently in survival mode. Perhaps one solution is to implement a 2 stage investment process: provide grants to groups to help build capacity in a five year “start up” phase and then implement a second phase that only provides matching grants to those groups to establish local endowments.

The Coordination Account (25% of Annual Revenue)

The intent of the coordination granting account would be to increase the effectiveness and efficiencies of local stewardship groups operating in the same general area or region.

It would encourage community groups to work cooperatively to identify stewardship activities, develop joint project funding proposals, implement projects and monitor project effectiveness. It would build and strengthen partnerships, foster productive relationships with First Nations, expand community capacity to steward fish, wildlife, water and land resources, and enhance communications among stakeholders. A network of coordinators is especially needed in the south western portion of the province.

Example: Several groups working in the same watershed may be working at cross purposes. There are no formal communication channels and there seems to be no recognition of the politics of who’s who in the watershed. A matching grant could improve the efficiency and effectiveness of all groups by providing funding to either hire a coordinator or create a stewardship council for the watershed. The design of this aspect of the program has not been finalized and will require full discussion with the stewardship community and project funding partners.

Administration (10% of Annual Revenue)

The Stewardship Works! Trust would incur administrative costs.

Sample Annual Expenditure Plan

Assuming an annual 5% return on investment, a \$25 million Stewardship Works! Trust endowment would yield \$1.25 million: \$812.5K for the sustaining account, \$312.5K for the coordination account and \$125K for administration.

I. Next Steps

The establishment of a Stewardship Works! Trust would be a strategic investment to help set the course for a greener future. It would provide community based groups with the tools to be more effective in local work to mitigate the effects of climate change.

The Stewardship Centre for B.C. would be pleased to provide further information or background materials in support of this brief.

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in the 2008 Budget Consultation Process.

J. References Cited

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Appendix 1. The British Columbia Arts Renaissance Fund

Created in 2005, the BC Arts Renaissance Fund is an endowment and development fund established by a draw down grant of \$25 million from the Province of British Columbia to support arts and culture organizations across British Columbia. The BC Arts Renaissance Fund's endowment program assists British Columbia's nonprofit arts and culture organizations to build permanent endowment funds by providing matching grants. Income generated from the capital of the funds established by arts and culture organizations will provide annual revenues to ensure long-term financial stability and enable new opportunities for growth.

The intent of the program is to assist organizations to build endowment funds to improve their long-term financial sustainability. The BC Arts Renaissance Fund provides matching grants to leverage additional donations to build endowment funds held by arts and culture organizations in British Columbia. The growth of funds held by arts and culture organizations will provide greater capacity for the realization of their artistic and cultural mandates through the increased generation of annual income. This Fund encourages active involvement in the cultural affairs of the community by providing **1:1** matching grants for every dollar raised by private donors to create endowment funds to be held in perpetuity by an appropriate trustee organization.

In addition, the BC Arts Renaissance Fund established a complementary investment fund, the MEDICI (Management Endowment Development Implementation Capacity and Innovation) program in 2006. The program utilizes the income from the initial \$25 million gift from the Province of British Columbia, to support the execution of planning

and organizational development initiatives that assist arts and culture organizations with their overall financial capacity. The program provides contributions to arts and cultural organizations wishing to undertake projects to improve their organizational capacity and long-term financial stability. Activities include: the implementation of marketing, development, communications, and fund-development plans and/or initiatives; audience development and outreach (engaging new and diverse audiences); the creation and production of outreach and communications materials; support for key staff positions identified to implement an organization's strategic opportunities; and the development of initiatives that build profit centres, and/or alternative revenue streams.

Accomplishments

- Since its inception the BC Arts Renaissance Fund has made 127 endowment matches, totalling \$14,793,865.
- The result, in its first two years of operation, has been to permanently endow close to \$30,000,000 for BC Arts and Cultural organizations.
- 40 of the 130 grants, (31%) were made to smaller organizations with annual budgets under \$500,000.
- A total 57 new endowments have been established.
- 50% of the total matches have occurred outside of Vancouver.
- The MEDICI program (improving organizational capacity) has allocated \$2,049,435 to 26 different organizations across the province.

Appendix 2. The Role of Governments With Respect to Shared Stewardship Partnerships

Gardner et al (2003) defined the primary roles of governments in relation to shared stewardship partnerships. They are:

- to support shared stewardship activities by providing a mix of voluntary and regulatory tools;
- to allow generous access to the science that informs both regulatory requirements and voluntary actions;
- to encourage voluntary compliance with regulatory requirements;
- to provide a positive environment for non-government stewardship practitioners;
- **to assist local communities build capacity to undertake stewardship initiatives and to maintain and enhance volunteerism;**
- to recognize the value of community-based groups in collecting information, promoting awareness and building community support for shared stewardship activities;
- to provide funding or other incentives to support and sustain community-based

stewardship; and

- to support education and information programs (social marketing) that promote shared stewardship.

Reference Cited

Gardner, Julia; Catherine Sherlock and Garvin Hunter. 2003. Appreciating the Values, Needs and Potential of the Stewardship and Conservation Sector in Canada: Strategic Directions for Funding and Other Support. The Leading Edge Stewardship & Conservation in Canada 2003.

Appendix 3. Contributions of Community-Based Stewardship Groups in British Columbia

3.1 B.C. Examples

Here are recent examples of individual and group activities in the stewardship sector:

1. Zo Ann Morten, Streamkeeper

Zo Ann has been involved in monitoring of her local streams in North Vancouver since 1993 through volunteering with the North Shore Streamkeepers (NSSK). Using the Streamkeeper Program the NSSK's has collected data on stream health, monitored for change over time and have been successful in using this data to inform consultation processes. This has resulted in positive changes within their Municipality as well as within Provincial and Federal Policy.

2. Landowner Contact Programs in the Cowichan Valley

Landowner contact programs have been favoured by many organizations as a tool for encouraging land stewardship. Over the 11 years from 1993 to 2004, the Cowichan Community Land Trust (CCLT) conducted 7 different landowner contact programs funded by 14 project funders. An impressive 1477 landowners were contacted. The analysis shows that 20% to 36% of landowners who were contacted agreed to host a site visit. Following site visits, between 22% and 98% of landowners agreed to sign a stewardship pledge, a personal pledge to stewardship ethics. Landowners were motivated to care for their natural environment and eager for information about how to do it. They responded with a wide range of changes in land use practices.

3. The Spanish Bank Creek Daylighting Project

The Spanish Bank Streamkeepers group was formed in 2000 to complete the daylighting on the lower portions of Spanish Bank Creek. Fish now have access to a small urban watershed and residents of Vancouver have a wonderful new area to view salmon. There has been longstanding community interest in the project and now that it's finished, this streamkeeper group carries out activities in this and two neighboring creeks. The project

receives a lot of attention due its location in Vancouver in a highly used and much loved recreation area. Members are very interested in doing storm drain marking and land owner contact to raise the level of awareness in the surrounding area. They are working with UBC students to carry out streamkeeper activities in the watershed.

4. The Highway 97 Wildlife Fencing Project

Highway 97 is a major transportation corridor on the west side of Okanagan Lake. Between Summerland and Peachland, it bisects a mule deer wintering and migration area. Each winter, there had been a high number of vehicle/animal collisions accidents along this stretch of highway. Up to 202 deer carcasses were removed from highway between November 1996 and April 1997 and as many as two animals for every one animal found dead on the highway were believed to have wandered off the road to ditches and nearby orchards to die.

In the spring of 1997, a plan was developed to address this serious and long-standing concern. The local B.C. Wildlife Federation region and member clubs from Summerland and Peachland led a collaborative effort with highway commuters, ICBC and numerous government agencies to construct a “top-railed,” 8ft high, high tensile page-wire fence to restrict deer access to the highway. One-way gates were provided at strategic locations to enable deer caught on the highway side of the fence to escape. Panel gates or "Texas Cattle Guards" were installed at driveway crossings to private land holdings. The Highway 97 Wildlife Fencing project was a win / win project for all involved. Most importantly, the project lowered the risk of fatal accidents to both people and wildlife.

3.2 General Contributions of Stewardship Groups in Canada

Gardner et al. (2003) defined the environmental contributions of local stewardship groups as:

- awareness raising;
- public and community engagement;
- policy and legislation improvements;
- innovation and management advances toward sustainability;
- protection of land;
- promotion of stewardship practices on private land;
- research;
- provision of information, knowledge and tools; and
- building partnerships.

She further described the economic contributions as:

- preventing costs to society and the government – now and in the future;
- protecting/restoring environmental services;
- protecting/restoring the resource base;
- doing work on a volunteer or lower cost basis than government;

- providing a basis for recreation and tourism;
- purchasing goods and services by; and
- attracting population and higher property values.

Appendix 4. Some Characteristics of Community-based Stewardship Groups in British Columbia

4.1 British Columbia's Voluntary Sector

The Government of Canada's Voluntary Sector Initiative has provided some recent data on the health of the voluntary sector across the nation. For British Columbia, here are pertinent parts of the most recent data for all sectors (Murray, 2006):

- “In 2003, there were an estimated 20,270 nonprofit and voluntary organizations in the province.
- 62% provided services in their local region.
- The sub-sectors most dependent on government were Health (77%), Education and Research (66%) and Social Services (59%).
- The sub-sectors most dependent on donations and grants were Religion (67%), International Aid (61%) and Environment (44%).
- Nearly 60% of the groups were served by fewer than 25 volunteers.
- Environmental organizations in the province comprised 4% of the sector (810 groups) but attracted 19% of the volunteers.
- Among British Columbia's nonprofit and voluntary organizations that received government funding, 66% reported problems with reduced funding from this source. The twin problems of funders being willing to fund only projects (55%), and unwilling to fund core operations (62%) were also conspicuous.
- The most frequently cited problem among all organizations was ‘having difficulty planning for the future’ (55%).”

4.2 British Columbia's Community-Based Volunteer Stewardship Groups

There have been other surveys and reports to further describe the current challenges facing volunteer stewardship groups who comprise a large portion of the Environment sub-sector in the province:

- The 100 participants at the Stewards of the Lower Fraser Workshop (Dovetail, 2002) stressed that money for stewardship must be long term, and that it needs to be adaptable to the needs of different watersheds and communities.
- The B.C. Recreation Stewardship Panel (2002) recognized the value of volunteer stewards and recommended that the B.C Government make “greater use of volunteers to ensure more efficient or effective service delivery without compromising the public ownership of land or the conservation, protection and restoration standards.”

- Harvey and Greer (2004) suggested that the lucrative period for salmon stewardship was over. They predict that the kinds of salmon stewardship projects that will happen in B.C. over the next decade and the way they are chosen, managed and funded will simply be different from those in the 1990s. They recommended to “create consortia with political support” and to make stewardship work as “part of a plan” (salmon recovery, watershed, land use etc).
- Smailes (2004) noted that, due to the erosion of (project) funders, the volunteer stewardship sector in the province was on the “brink of a crisis” that required immediate government action for core funding, utilizing coordinated funding arrangements with partners, longer-term funding programs and financing arrangements. “The results of the survey reveal the enormous energy, vision, creativity and dedication of a relatively small group of individuals in our province who are truly guardians of our natural heritage. Their value to us as citizens of this province and country and to the environment cannot be under-estimated. The surveyors were struck over and over again by how much groups had accomplished invariably with more cooperation, savvy and determination than with large budgets. At the same time, it is apparent that organizations have developed enormous capacity. However, they are not able to reach their full potential due to lack of access to appropriate funding and support.”
- Smailes (2006) re-sampled the stewardship groups from her 2004 survey to assist in the design of an Act Now project and found that the groups have survived by doing less. “What is a major barrier cited by many respondents, however, is a lack of funding for volunteer coordination and for programs that engage volunteers. Group representatives were eloquent and emphatic about the impossibility of running vibrant, ongoing programs with volunteer coordinators who are volunteers themselves. As a result, groups simply drop the programs that require significant numbers or long-term contributions of volunteers...With less (project) funding coming in, groups have focused on fulfilling their core mandates that do not involve large numbers of volunteers, and doing as much as they can with their roster of dedicated and experienced volunteers.”
- The East Kootenay Conservation Program (2006) randomly surveyed 750 residents and found 80% strongly supported the restoration of fish and wildlife habitats and 89% supported the idea of creating a dedicated conservation fund to support environmental conservation initiatives.
- The Pacific Salmon Foundation (2006) surveyed the aquatic stewardship community. Data showed that the lack of funding for coordination, administration and overhead was a major challenge for community-based stewardship groups.

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Appendix 5. Summary of the Stewardship Works! Workshop

Stewardship Works! is a program that was first proposed in 2006 by the Stewardship Centre for BC and the Ministry of Environment to help address the known core funding barrier that community-based stewardship groups currently experience. On May 23, 2007, representatives of funding partners, governments and stewardship groups participated in a workshop to have input into the design of a “made for B.C.” program that proposed to provide multi-year core funding grants to strengthen local groups. The recommendations of the attendees at that workshop are summarized as follows:

“Workshop participants agreed that the health of community-based stewardship groups is an important issue for achievement of environmental goals; both those of the groups and communities themselves and of governments’ shared stewardship programs.

Core funding is one of a suite of related activities that affects the organizational health of non-government groups. If core funding is considered, it should be part of a broader overall long term strategy to deal with the health of NGOs (lack of core funding is a barrier; put core funding grants in context).

The challenge is to give groups a “hand up” to improve health while not creating dependency with permanent “handouts.” Core funding should not be a permanent cost.

There was agreement on the range of activities that are supportable by core funding. Generally, these activities are associated with the internal and external aspects of training, retraining, deploying, recruiting and retaining volunteers. (Core funding supports the capacity of groups; keep the accountabilities for core funding separate from the accountabilities for projects.)

Management of any core funding model requires clear, transparent and equitable governance and administration processes so that as many groups as possible can benefit.

Application, reporting and evaluation requirements should be simple and electronic. The effects of core funding expenditures must be easily quantified.

Evaluation is an important component of a core funding program that needs to be designed into the program from the outset. Evaluating the effects of core funding is different from project evaluation, and as such, needs a different set of measurement criteria, e.g. growth of organizational capacity.

There was agreement that the core funding model should be beta tested or evaluated as proposed and that there be distribution of funds on a pilot basis. As per the intent of *Stewardship Works! Program*, the evaluation framework should be vetted through expert evaluators across the country and in other sectors, such as health, where there is a wealth of evaluative expertise on public projects.”

Appendix 6. The Stewardship Centre for British Columbia Society

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□ The Stewardship Centre for British Columbia Society (SCBC) was registered as a non-profit society in 2006. We evolved from a stewardship technical committee of governments that was established in 1994. We manage a virtual stewardship centre that provides valuable technical, instructional and networking information, products, tools and services that foster effective stewardship activities by linking people, organizations and businesses in British Columbia. We also have linkages with like-minded Canadians via a national stewardship web portal.

The governance structure of the society is modeled after the Fraser Basin Council. It is currently comprised of the following members and directors:

Members

Position	Member	Organization
Aquatic Stewardship	Eric Bonham	B.C. Water & Waste Association
Terrestrial Stewardship	Deborah Gibson	B.C. Conservation Foundation
Government, Federal	Greg Mallette	Fisheries and Oceans Canada
Government, Provincial	Sylvia von Schuckmann	Ministry of Environment
Member-at-Large	Geoff Chislett	Retired fisheries biologist

Directors

Position	Director	Organization
NGO Aquatic	Nikki Wright	SeaChange Marine Conservation
NGO Terrestrial	Annemarie Koch	Johnstone Strait Killer Whale Ctr.
NGO North	Margo Hearne	Dekatla Sanctuary Society
NGO North	Vacant	
NGO Kootenay	Helen Sander	Mark Creek/Wild Sight
NGO Interior	Lisa Scott	South Okanagan-Similkameen (SOS) Stewardship Program
	Bryn White (alternate)	SOS Conservation Program
NGO L. Mainland	Lonnie Prouse Gordon Kibble (alternate)	Langley Environmental Partners Fraser River Estuarium Society
NGO Vanc.Isl.	Maggie Paquet Ann Archibald (alternate)	Citizens' Stewardship Coalition Cowichan Community Land Trust

NGO National	Ernie Ewaschuk Lynn McIntyre (alternate)	Land Stewardship Centre Wildlife Habitat Canada
Government, Fed.	Gretchen Harlow Bronwen Geddes (alternate)	Environment Canada Environment Canada
Government, Fed.	Greg Mallette Joanne Day (alternate)	Fisheries and Oceans Fisheries and Oceans
Government, Prov.	Sylvia von Schuckmann	Ministry of Environment
Government, Prov.	Vacant	
Government, Aboriginal	Vacant	
Government, Local	Donna Shugar Liana Ayach (alternate)	Sunshine Coast Region City of Surrey
Industry	Andrew McDonald	BC Hydro
Industry	Glenn Ralph	Investors Group
Industry, Small Business	Peter Abrams	Peter Abrams Consulting
Director-At-Large	Liz Stanlake	
Director-At-Large	TBD	Fraser Basin Council

An alternate director is an appointee that receives all the information that a director receives, is entitled to participate in all director meetings and serve on administrative and/or project committees. They may not vote in a directors meeting unless the designated director is absent.