

**The Assessment and Planning Project
BC Case Report No.3**

**Responses to Urban and Rural Land Use Pressures:
Three Case Studies from the Okanagan-Shuswap**

by

Jennifer Ellis

**Department of Environment and Resource Studies
University of Waterloo
June 2000**

The Assessment and Planning Project

Over the past decade or so, several Canadian jurisdictions have moved to integrate environmental considerations more effectively in land use planning. Many of the most promising initiatives have been in the southern parts of Ontario and British Columbia, which are enjoying and suffering significant population increases and associated urban pressures.

Government authorities and citizens in these two areas have used many different approaches to manage growth and improve environmental sensitivity. Relevant initiatives have involved use of strategic environmental assessments or explicit use of environmental assessment principles and obligations in special planning and growth management regimes or in consensus-based multi-stakeholder co-operation efforts. Some have been driven by provincial action; others have been led by community groups and local citizens. Some reflect a larger vision of progress to sustainability; others were begun in response to pressing immediate problems and with understandably limited attention to overall implications.

The Assessment and Planning research project, funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, seeks to compare and learn from experiences in the two provinces. Part of the work centres on a series of case studies covering a range of initiatives in the two provinces. *Responses to Urban and Rural Land Use Pressures: Three Case Studies from the Okanagan-Shuswap* is the third report on British Columbia cases. For other case studies and publications of the project, contact the project coordinator and editor of the case study series, Dr. Robert Gibson, Department of Environment and Resource Studies, University of Waterloo, Waterloo, Ontario, Canada N2L 3G1.

The Okanagan-Shuswap report, *Responses to Urban and Rural Land Use Pressures*

The Okanagan-Shuswap region in the southern interior of British Columbia is a region of picturesque valleys and lakes, unique arid ecosystems, an economy heavily dependent on tourism and agriculture, and major population growth. Some of its urban centres have been described as planning disasters and the growth effects are spreading. This report examines three significant responses in the region: the Regional District of Central Okanagan Regional Growth Strategy, Community/Crown Interface planning occurring through the Okanagan-Shuswap Land and Resource Management Planning Process, and the Salmon River Watershed Round Table. As might be expected in communities where the ecological, social and economic costs of growth have not yet become apparent to many people, these initiatives have had limited success. Their strengths and weaknesses suggest that if sustainability is to be achieved, it will likely be through a long slow process involving a variety of planning initiatives operating in conjunction with each other.

The Author

Jennifer Ellis, a resident of Victoria, British Columbia, is completing a doctorate in environmental studies in Department of Geography at the University of Waterloo.

Table of Contents

1 Sustainability and Urban and Rural Land Use	5
Impacts of Urban and Rural Land Use	5
Defining A Vision of Sustainability	5
Incorporating Sustainability Principles into Decision Making	8
Focus of this Report	11
2 Overview of the Okanagan-Shuswap Region	14
Population Growth	14
Governance Structure	15
Past and Present Urban and Rural Planning and Land Use	16
Critical Challenges for Sustainability	20
3 Case Study: RDCO Growth Strategy Development	32
The Initiative	32
Background	32
Development of the RDCO Growth Strategy	35
Effectiveness	40
Efficiency	49
Equity	51
Conclusions	53
4 Case Study: Community/Crown Interface Zone	57
The Initiative	57
Background	58
Development of the Community/Crown Interface RMZ	60
Effectiveness	61
Efficiency	71
Equity	74
Conclusions	74
5 Case Study: The Salmon River Watershed Roundtable	78
The Initiative	78
Background	79
Activities of the Salmon River Watershed Roundtable	80
Future Activities	88
Effectiveness	90
Efficiency	102
Equity	107
Conclusions	111
6 Conclusions	115
Results	115
Overall Successes and Disappointments	118
Barriers to Greater Success	120
Key Lessons	122

Responses to Urban and Rural Land Use Pressures: Three Case Studies from the Okanagan-Shuswap

The Okanagan-Shuswap region of British Columbia has often been described as a picturesque valley of beautiful lakes, lush orchards and vineyards, and unique desert ecosystems. Other descriptions, however, are beginning to emerge. Kelowna, the largest city in the Okanagan, has more recently been characterized by a visitor as “a city built with contempt or disregard for wildlife habitat, resource preservation and long term economic costs” that “equals the worst American planning disasters.”¹ There is growing recognition of the negative ecological, social and economic impacts of urban and rural settlement activity or land use in the Okanagan-Shuswap and initiatives are being undertaken to address these impacts.

This report considers the potential for some of those initiatives to promote ecological, social and economic sustainability in an effective, efficient and equitable manner. In particular, it examines three urban and rural land use initiatives in the Okanagan-Shuswap region:

- the Regional District of Central Okanagan Regional Growth Strategy (RDCO RGS),
- Community/Crown Interface (CCI) planning occurring through the Okanagan-Shuswap Land and Resource Management Planning Process (OSLRMP), and
- the Salmon River Watershed Round Table (SRWR).

The case study research was conducted between January 1997 and May 2000. The approach taken varied depending on the case. For the SRWR study, several key members of the SRWR were interviewed and a variety of documents by and about the SRWR were consulted. For the CCI zone initiative, a few key individuals were interviewed, on the condition of anonymity; several CCI working group and OSLRMP meetings were attended, and documents produced in association with the OSLRMP process were reviewed. In the case of the RDCO RGS, a few individuals were interviewed, again on the condition of anonymity, and publicly available documents were consulted. In addition, there were a few individuals who were interviewed but did not wish their statements to be included in the case reports. Their comments, however, were useful in shaping the overall assessment and commentary about the potential for the initiatives to promote sustainability.

¹ Brent Thompson, “City’s growth comes at high cost,” *The Kelowna Daily Courier*, May 21 (1997), p. A11.

1 Sustainability and Urban and Rural Land Use

Impacts of Urban and Rural Land Use

Urban and rural land use, in Canada and the pressures it places on surrounding ecosystems has created a complex array of ecological problems: habitats of all types are being degraded or lost, water resources are being over-utilized and degraded, soils are becoming damaged, air is becoming increasingly polluted, biodiversity is threatened, and open green space is rapidly diminishing. These are just the problems that can be easily identified and to some degree measured. Far less is known about the impact of urban and rural developments on the functioning and structure of local ecosystems and the capacity of local ecosystems to assimilate waste and pollution.² Ecological problems in turn create social and economic problems, such as reduction of recreation opportunities, loss of visual amenity and agricultural land, exacerbation of natural hazards, elimination of resource based jobs, unsightly urban sprawl, health problems, decreased quality of life, increased economic inequities and poverty. Moreover, the impact of urban and rural land use in Canada extends far beyond surrounding ecosystems to the ecosystems of the world from which we draw energy, food and other resources and commodities and to which we send waste and pollution, making the "ecological footprint" of our urban areas far larger than the actual land they occupy.³

Unfortunately, most of these negative effects are occurring as a result of most of us simply going about our everyday lives, living the North American lifestyle. As a result, simple solutions are often not readily available. The Okanagan-Shuswap is beginning to show signs of the complex web of ecological, social and economic problems created by urban and rural land use elsewhere in Canada and in many other parts of the world. Recent rapid population growth in the unique fragile and arid ecosystems just add greater urgency to the need to deal with urban and rural land use problems in the Okanagan-Shuswap.

Defining A Vision of Sustainability

The term "sustainability" is often used to refer to a normative vision of a state in which we have overcome the web of ecological, social and economic problems created by human activities such as urban and rural land use. The concept of sustainability has its roots in biology in the notion of ecological carrying capacity, which essentially means that ecosystems have a physical limit to the life they can sustain. If there are too many organisms consuming too many resources,

² Mark Roseland, *Toward Sustainable Communities* (Gabriola Island: New Society Publishers, 1998).

³ Mathis Wackernagel, and William Rees, *Our Ecological Footprint* (Gabriola Island: The New Catalyst, 1996); Roseland, *Toward Sustainable* [note 2].

collapse will occur to bring the population back in line with carrying capacity.⁴ The concept was popularized and given a human face through the World Commission on Environment and Development's (WCED) term "sustainable development," which was defined as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs."⁵

The WCED definition has been widely criticized for focusing too much on merely meeting human needs, and implying that development in the form of growth can and should be sustained.⁶ Thus in much of the literature, there has been a move to refine the concept of sustainable development to incorporate a broader array of ecosystem and other species' needs and take the emphasis away from development. As part of this process, many people have started to replace the term "sustainable development" with the term "sustainability" to emphasize this change in meaning and focus. While many people agree with the "ideal" of sustainability as a normative goal, there remains much disagreement with regard to its meaning and implications.⁷ Broadly defined, pursuing sustainability means ensuring that desirable social, ecological and economic features or characteristics of our planet and society can be maintained in perpetuity.⁸ Defining what those features or characteristics are, and what needs to be done to sustain them in perpetuity, is where much of the difficulty arises.

Sustainability requires preserving, rehabilitating and enhancing both ecological, natural capital and human, social capital.⁹ We are accustomed to recognizing the need to preserve, rehabilitate and enhance natural capital, which includes life support systems, stocks of both renewable and non-renewable resources, biotic diversity, and the structure and functioning of ecosystems. The importance of social capital, which encompasses the intangible cohesion, shared knowledge, cooperation, creativity, empowerment and general quality of life of groups of people, is often less recognized, but is equally critical to sustainability.¹⁰ To achieve sustainability, we will need to guarantee social and economic equity, and ensuring that all persons "have freedom from extreme want ... as well as the positive ability to participate creatively and self-directedly in the political and economic system."¹¹ As part of social capital, there is a need for a healthy economy to ensure that people have viable opportunities to make a living, although in this context a healthy economy is one that operates within ecological limits

⁴ Timothy Beatley and Kristy Manning, *The Ecology of Place: Planning for Environment, Economy and Community*, (Washington, D.C.: Island Press, 1997).

⁵ World Commission on Environment and Development, *Our Common Future*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), pp 8.

⁶ Michael Redclift, "The Meaning of Sustainable Development," *Geoforum*, 23:3 (1992), pp.395-403; John Robinson, George Francis, Russel Legge and Sally Lerner, "Defining a Sustainable Society," *Alternatives Journal*, 17:2 (1990), pp. 36-46.

⁷ Robinson, Francis, Legge and Lerner, "Defining a" [note 6]; Roseland, *Toward Sustainable* [note 2].

⁸ Robinson, Francis, Legge and Lerner, "Defining a" [note 6].

⁹ Beatley and Manning, *The Ecology* [note 4]; Roseland, *Toward Sustainable* [note 2].

¹⁰ Roseland, *Toward Sustainable* [note 2].

¹¹ Robinson, Francis, Legge and Lerner, "Defining a" [note 6], p. 44.

and does not have growth as a primary goal. Because of the importance of both natural and social capital, many people describe sustainability as consisting of three key components: ecological, social and economic sustainability.

The basic principles of sustainability outlined above provide a general picture of the state we are aiming for. From an urban and rural land use perspective, there is no single vision of a sustainable community, and citizens of each community must take part in defining what is meant by a sustainable community from their own perspective.¹² However, some of the generally accepted characteristics of a sustainable community include

- efficient use of energy and land through higher density cluster development;¹³
- “mixed use zones integrating housing, commerce and non-toxic appropriate scale manufacturing;”¹⁴
- “urban farming, urban forestry, regenerated wildlife corridors, and ecologically restored wetlands and natural areas right in the cities;”¹⁵
- a reduced need for automobile use through increased density, pedestrian oriented villages, and greater availability of environmentally sound transportation options, such as cycling and transit;¹⁶
- a variety of different housing arrangements, including co-operative and multi-family housing;¹⁷
- local production of as many products and recycling and composting of as much waste as possible;
- use of renewable wind and solar energy wherever viable;¹⁸
- a sense of place and active civic life with social, cultural and recreational opportunities;¹⁹
- practice and promotion of fundamental freedoms, equity and social justice;²⁰ and
- participatory, holistic, and equitable governance and planning.²¹

¹² Roseland, *Toward Sustainable* [note 2].

¹³ Beatley and Manning, *The Ecology* [note 4]; Roseland, *Toward Sustainable* [note 2].

¹⁴ Mike Carr, “Eco-cities and the Biodiversity Crisis,” *The New Catalyst*, 27 (1994), p. 7.

¹⁵ Carr, “Eco-cities and”, [note 14], p. 7.

¹⁶ Beatley and Manning, *The Ecology* [note 4]; Carr, “Eco-cities” [note 14]; Todd Saunders, “Ecology and Community Design,” *Alternatives Journal*, 22:2 (1996), pp. 24-29; Wackernagel and Rees, *Our Ecological Footprint* [note 3].

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ Beatley and Manning, *The Ecology* [note 4].

²⁰ Beatley and Manning, *The Ecology* [note 4].

²¹ Beatley and Manning, *The Ecology* [note 4]; Carr, “Eco-cities” [note 14]; Todd Saunders, “Ecology and Community Design,” *Alternatives Journal*, 22:2 (1996), pp. 24-29; Wackernagel and Rees, *Our Ecological Footprint* [note 3].

Incorporating Sustainability Principles into Decision Making

Creating communities that are ecologically, economically and socially sustainable is no small challenge, considering the point from which we are starting in most Canadian cities. Moving communities towards greater ecological, economic and social sustainability has traditionally been accomplished through a number of environmental planning and policy tools, such as environmental assessment, regulation, protection, voluntary instruments, financial incentives and infrastructure development that are undertaken at the federal, provincial and local levels.²² Utilized together these tools could serve as a powerful force for incorporating principles of sustainability into government and private decision making . Unfortunately, many of these tools and approaches, if they are applied at all, are still treated as add-ons. They are utilized after traditional government decision making to mitigate the impacts of those decisions.

Moving towards sustainability will require more than just considering the environment as an add-on. It will require integrating environmental tools and policies that promote sustainability so deeply within government and private decision making, that they become an automatic part of the way decisions are made, making separate environmental policy and planning tools unnecessary. To achieve sustainability in communities, it is critical that this is done in association with all government and private decision making at all levels. Land use, policy and budget decisions made by provincial, federal and First Nations governments and private corporations and citizens can have negative effects on land use in urban and rural areas, despite the best efforts of local governments. Thus, while this paper focuses on regional scale urban and rural land use planning and local stewardship, the challenge of moving towards sustainability in urban and rural land use demands attention to decision making in the broadest sense to incorporate all of the decisions made by local, provincial, federal and First Nations governments, corporations, citizens' groups and the general public, whether they are ecological, social or economic.

Achieving sustainability will also require greater attention to the implementation of decisions that promote sustainability in urban and rural land use.²³ For example, local urban and rural land use planning generally occurs only once every five to ten years with the production of Official Community Plans (OCP). Even if the OCP encourages environmentally sound land use, the results are often disappointing because,

current development standards, regulations and policies tend to discourage the very form of development that is called for in most community plans. Our incentives have not caught up with our intent.”²⁴

²² Roseland, *Toward Sustainable* [note 2].

²³ Calvin Sandborn, *Green Space and Growth: Conserving Natural Areas in B.C. Communities* (Victoria: Commission on Resources and Environment, 1996), p. 5.

²⁴ Regional District of Central Okanagan (RDCO), *Shaping Growth in the Central Okanagan: Growth Management Issues: Draft* (Kelowna: Regional District of Central Okanagan, 1997), p. 2.

Moreover, between planning periods, countless additional decisions are made interpreting, and adjusting the OCP. Most of these decisions are driven by needs to respond to the multitude of development applications that local governments receive between planning periods. Typically, many of these applications are inconsistent with the OCP's intent. In addition, while plans may call for desirable environmental initiatives, the necessary resources and commitment for implementation are often simply not in place. The British Columbia *Municipal Act* is permissive in allowing individual OCP amendments even when they change the character of the OCP. Incremental decisions to adjust the OCP can lead to substantial departures from the original plan. Local politicians, who are elected for three year terms, all too often have a short-term focus on getting re-elected, which often means they are in favour of additional development. Thus, OCPs that promote environmental protection at the outset do not always stand up to political pressure in the amendment process.²⁵

Ideally, incorporating principles of sustainability into decision making should be accomplished in a manner that is effective, efficient and equitable.²⁶

EFFECTIVENESS

Effectively incorporating principles of sustainability into decision making would include the following:

- having an overall goal of promoting ecological, social and economic sustainability;
- treating the environment holistically as a complex array of interlocking, interacting systems in which 'everything is connected to everything else' and actions in one system, whether ecological, social or economic, can have significant impacts in other systems and actions in one location can have significant impacts in other locations;²⁷
- making decisions on the basis of ecological, or ecosystem, boundaries, such as watersheds or sub-watersheds, rather than administrative boundaries;²⁸
- "keeping all the pieces" and natural structure and functioning of ecological systems, and rehabilitating and restoring the pieces and natural functions that have already been damaged or lost;
- basing decisions on the precautionary principle, whereby activities that may have serious deleterious effects on an ecosystem, community or other valued receptor are avoided or adjusted to be less threatening and more reversible, even if there remain significant uncertainties about the possible damages and their likelihood;²⁹

²⁵ RDCO, *Shaping Growth* [note 24]; Sandborn, *Green Space* [note 23].

²⁶ Robert Gibson, "Lessons of a Legislated Process: Twelve Years of Experience with Ontario's Environmental Assessment Act," *Impact Assessment Bulletin*, 8:3 (1990), pp. 63-80; Timothy O'Riordan and Jonathan O'Riordan, "On Evaluating Public Examination of Controversial Projects," in Harold D. Foster (ed.) *Advances in Resource Management* (London: Belhaven Press, 1993).

²⁷ Royal Commission on the Future of the Toronto Waterfront (RCFTW), *Regeneration: Toronto's Waterfront and the Sustainable City: Final Report*, (Toronto: Minister of Supply and Services Canada, 1992).

²⁸ Lynton K. Caldwell, "Disharmony in the Great Lakes Basin: Institutional Jurisdictions Frustrate the Ecosystem Approach," *Alternatives*, 20:3 (1994), pp. 26-31.

²⁹ Norman Myers, "Biodiversity and the precautionary principle," *Ambio*, 22:2-3 (1993), pp. 74-79.

- considering carefully the broad cumulative and indirect effects of various activities;
- giving ecological, social and economic concerns equivalent and joint consideration as critical components of long term sustainability;
- creating an open and adaptable, iterative approach to decision making and planning with continuous monitoring systems and evaluation criteria so that the initiative can be adjusted if necessary to changes in the ecological, social or economic situation;³⁰
- basing decisions on an agreed upon vision of the specific attributes of ecological, social and economic sustainability, and backcasting to determine what needs to be done to get to that vision;
- promoting the use of participative institutions and practices;³¹
- promoting sustainable social and economic institutions and practices, that allow all members of society to have access to a basic adequate level of income and livelihood, freedom from social and economic repression and general social and economic equity;³²
- fostering a sense of stewardship towards one's environment and a commitment to the greater good of both community and place; and
- making decisions that are implementable with existing resources and political will.

EFFICIENCY

Efficiency can be defined as “maximizing the [positive] difference between benefits and costs.”³³ Defining what is a benefit and what is a cost and how they are to be compared is often a problematic aspect of evaluating efficiency. Traditional approaches to evaluating efficiency tried to quantify all of the benefits and costs so that they could be reduced down to a single cost-benefit ratio.³⁴ Due to the inherent difficulties of this approach, more recent evaluations of efficiency have tended to concentrate on qualitative information on benefits and costs. Efficiently incorporating principles of sustainability into decision making would include the following:

- completing decision making and implementation in a reasonable time frame;
- ensuring that the economic costs of decision making and implementation are reasonable given the benefits that will ensue;
- basing decisions on a full cost accounting of the ecological, social and economic costs and benefits of an activity, including often ignored future costs and benefits and externalities, such as cumulative and indirect effects;
- coordinating the efforts of all of the relevant government and non-government agencies and stakeholders, across all relevant geographical boundaries;
- conducting decision making and implementation in a manner that ensures that all stakeholders “buy-in” to the initiative and will not undermine the initiative during the decision-making process, or at a later date; and

³⁰ C.S. Holling, “Resilience and Stability of Ecological Systems,” *Annual Review of Ecology and Systematics*, 4 (1973), pp. 1-21.

³¹ Robinson, Francis, Legge and Lerner, “Defining a” [note 6].

³² *Ibid.*

³³ Bruce Mitchell, *Geography and Resource Analysis* (Essex: Longman Scientific and Technical, 1989), p. 226.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

- conducting the decision-making initiative with a long-term vision so that it will be effective for as long as possible before having to be repeated or replaced.

EQUITY

Equity is generally defined in both a distributive and procedural sense. Distributive equity requires “achieving fairness in the distribution of benefits and costs.”³⁵ Procedural equity is “to treat the parties to the distribution equally, where to treat the parties equally means to give, and evidence, equal attention and concern to the interests of the parties.”³⁶ Promoting social equity is an aspect of effectiveness, but doing so in an equitable manner is a matter of equity. Key aspects of equity in a decision-making initiative would thus include:

- ensuring that there is fairness in the distribution of social and economic costs and benefits arising from the initiative; and
- allowing and assisting all stakeholders potentially affected by the initiative to participate fully and meaningfully in any decision making and implementation associated with the initiative.

Focus of this Report

This report considers how effectively, efficiently and equitably principles of sustainability have been incorporated into three urban and rural land use initiatives occurring in the Okanagan-Shuswap region:

- Regional District of Central Okanagan Regional Growth Strategy (RDCO RGS),
- Community/Crown Interface (CCI) planning occurring through the Okanagan-Shuswap Land and Resource Management Planning Process (OSLRMP), and
- the Salmon River Watershed Round Table (SRWR).

The Okanagan-Shuswap was selected for study because it is an area that is currently experiencing significant population growth, which can exacerbate ecological, social and economic problems. In addition, its unique and fragile ecosystems make it more complex and difficult to establish plans that provide the ecosystems with sufficient protection while accommodating a large population.

The three initiatives were selected to illustrate different approaches to local and regional urban and rural land use decision making and to reveal how different types of initiatives vary in their ability to incorporate sustainability principles. The Regional District of Central Okanagan Regional Growth Strategy (RDCO RGS), which started in 1996, is a regulatory/policy initiative to try to address growth through the provincial growth strategies legislation. The Community/Crown Interface (CCI) planning is a regulatory/policy initiative to try to promote sustainability in crown land management on the urban fringe being undertaken by the four regional districts in the region, through the ongoing Okanagan-Shuswap Land and Resource

³⁵ *Ibid.* p. 226.

³⁶ Rodger Beehler, (1983) “The Concept of Fairness,” in *Canadian Institute of Resource Law: Fairness in Environmental and Social Impact Assessment Processes* (Calgary: University of Calgary, 1983), p. 2.

Management Planning (OSLRMP) process. The Salmon River Watershed Round Table (SRWR) is a community driven planning and stewardship initiative to try to ensure the sustainability of the Salmon River Watershed in the Shuswap area of the region.

The case studies vary in type, scope and lead group, and therefore offer an opportunity to discuss how these factors affect the potential for the planning initiative to incorporate principles of sustainability effectively, efficiently and equitably. For example, both the RDCO RGS and CCI are local government driven, while the SRWR is community driven. The lead groups in the RDCO RGS and CCI have some authority to make and implement the decisions they are discussing, whereas in the SRWR the lead group has very little formal authority. The RDCO RGS covers only one regional district, while the CCI covers all of the regional districts in the region and the SRWR covers a large watershed that is only partially located in the Okanagan-Shuswap region.

In evaluating initiatives based on the criteria of effectiveness, efficiency and equity outlined above it is important to note that the criteria both complement each other and involve conflicts that require trade-offs. For example, for an initiative to be *effective* in promoting ecological, social and economic sustainability, it typically must also be reasonably *equitable* in its distribution of costs and benefits. But while highly inequitable initiatives are not likely to gain the legitimacy and support needed for successful implementation,³⁷ processes that insist on complete equity are likely to be inefficiently costly and time consuming.³⁸ These trade-offs must be recognized.

It is also important to consider effectiveness, efficiency and equity throughout the several stages of an initiative. For example, an initiative may be intended to take a holistic, ecosystem approach to decision making, but in practice may fail to consider all ecosystem interactions and impacts. Similarly, an initiative may incorporate principles of sustainability on paper, but these principles may never actually be implemented on the ground.

It should also be recognized that most initiatives cannot be expected to incorporate all principles of sustainability. For example, some initiatives may focus in particular on ecological restoration and thus should not also be expected to promote ecological protection, although it should not have a negative effect on ecological protection. Similarly a particular decision or initiative may focus on addressing ecological problems, not economic and social inequities. As emphasized above, moving towards sustainability requires that all types of decision making, such as urban and rural land use initiatives, economic planning, and social planning, incorporate principles of sustainability. Thus the various types of decision making that we engage in should complement and positively re-enforce each other in terms of promoting sustainability. It would be unrealistic to expect every decision or initiative to promote all principles of sustainability. While urban and rural land use initiatives, which are the focus of this report, do have an impact on social and economic sustainability, some aspects of social and economic sustainability may be

³⁷ O’Riordan and O’Riordan, “On Evaluating” [note 26].

³⁸ *Ibid.*

better promoted through other types of initiatives. At the same time, initiatives should not have a negative effect on principles of sustainability that they do not necessarily promote.

Finally, it should be recognized that we are in the early stages of trying to move towards sustainability and stringently applying the effectiveness, efficiency and equity criteria outlined above in evaluating an initiative could be counterproductive. At the outset, many initiatives will fail to measure up to the effectiveness, efficiency and equity criteria outlined above. These initiatives, if they do begin to promote principles of sustainability, even with imperfect effectiveness, efficiency and equity, should be recognized for their strengths. Thus in considering the three initiatives evaluated in this report, the effectiveness, efficiency and equity criteria above were utilized only in a general sense as a framework of factors to be considered, not strictly met.

2 Overview of the Okanagan-Shuswap Region

The Okanagan-Shuswap is a region of mountains, valleys and lakes with numerous special natural features.³⁹ The Okanagan, the southern portion of the region, has a semi-arid climate that is unique to this one location in Canada, and is the northernmost extension of the dry climatic regime that occupies the interior of Northern Mexico and parts of the US.⁴⁰ In part because of its climate, the Okanagan-Shuswap is an extremely complex ecological region that is highly diverse in both wildlife and ecosystems.⁴¹ The climate and natural features of the Okanagan-Shuswap have made it ideal for forestry, tourism and agriculture, especially fruit and vegetable growing, wine production and ranching.⁴² There has also been diversification into manufacturing, communications and electronics as well as establishment of a large service industry and public service sector.⁴³

Population Growth

The Okanagan-Shuswap is one of the major population centres in BC and houses about eight percent of the province's population.⁴⁴ Rapid population growth took place in the Okanagan-Shuswap in the 1970s. While it slowed down in the mid 1980s⁴⁵ due to a slow-down in the forest and mining industries, it picked up again in the late 1980s, due in part to completion of the Coquihalla highway which enhanced transportation connections to the Lower Mainland. The total population of the Okanagan-Shuswap region grew from approximately 161,000 in 1971 to

³⁹ J. Paul & Associates Inc., Robinson Consulting Associates Ltd., Keystone Wildlife Research, and The ARA Consulting Group Inc, Economics Branch, Ministry of Employment and Investment, Okanagan-Shuswap LRMP Interagency Support Team, Okanagan-Shuswap LRMP Process Support Team, *Okanagan-Shuswap LRMP Area: Socio-Economic and Environmental Profile: Draft* (Victoria: Ministry of Employment and Investment, 1998).

⁴⁰ Dennis A. Demarchi, *An Introduction to the Ecoregions of British Columbia* (Victoria: Wildlife Branch, Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks, 1996). J. Paul & Associates Inc., *Okanagan-Shuswap LRMP* [note 1]; Thomas G. Northcote, "Effects of human population growth on the Fraser and Okanagan River systems, Canada: A comparative inquiry," *GeoJournal*, 40:1-2 (1996), pp. 127-133. G.G.E Scudder, and I.M. Smith, "Introduction and Summary," in Smith I.M. and G.G.E. Scudder, eds., *Assessment of Species Diversity in the Montane Cordillera Ecozone* (Burlington: Ecological Monitoring and Assessment Network, 1998).

⁴¹ Bob Lincoln, "Red and Blue Listed Wildlife Species," *Okanagan-Shuswap LRMP Toolkit Document*, Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks, November 16, 1997; G.G.E. Scudder, "Some Basic Concepts in Biodiversity and Biodiversity Conservation," *Okanagan-Shuswap LRMP Toolkit Document*, University of British Columbia, March 12, 1997; Scudder and Smith, "Introduction and" [note 2].

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ J. Paul & Associates Inc., *Okanagan-Shuswap LRMP* [note 1].

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ J. Paul & Associates Inc., *Okanagan-Shuswap LRMP* [note 1].

312,807 in 1996.⁴⁶ Between 1991 and 1996 the region experienced its highest growth rates with an average annual growth rate of 4 percent.⁴⁷ This was well over BC's average growth rate over that period and more than triple Canada's growth rate. The Central Okanagan regional district has been the fastest growing regional district in the Okanagan-Shuswap region, expanding from 51,584 in 1971 to an estimated 150,755 in 1999.⁴⁸

The major urban areas of the Okanagan-Shuswap, including Kelowna, Vernon, Penticton, Salmon Arm and Westbank have been the main centres of growth and house over 60 percent of the population.⁴⁹ Kelowna, the largest city in the Okanagan-Shuswap with a population over 80,000, is home to over 30 percent of the region's population and is one of the largest cities in the BC Interior.⁵⁰ However, even many of the small Okanagan villages and towns were experiencing five percent annual growth rates in the 1990s, while many small towns in the rest of Canada were shrinking.⁵¹ In 1998, the population of the Okanagan-Shuswap was projected to increase by 2.5 to 2.7 percent annually from now on, reaching 440,000 by the year 2010 and 540,000 by the years 2020.⁵² By 1999, however, it appeared that population growth in the Okanagan had slowed somewhat with the Columbia Shuswap and Central Okanagan regional districts experiencing between 0.8 and 0.9 percent growth from 1998 to 1999, and the Okanagan-Similkameen and North Okanagan regional districts experiencing annual growth rates of less than 0.5 percent.⁵³

Governance Structure

Four regional districts make up the majority of the Okanagan-Shuswap area: the Okanagan-Similkameen Regional District (OSRD) in the south, which extends north from the municipality of Osoyoos to the municipality of Summerland, the Regional District of Central Okanagan (RDCO), which occupies the smaller central part of the region and includes the municipality of Kelowna, the North Okanagan Regional District (NORD), which extends north from the municipality of Vernon past the municipality of Enderby and east past Mabel Lake, and the Columbia-Shuswap Regional District (CSRD), which makes up the majority of the northern portion of the planning area and includes the municipality of Salmon Arm. There are several municipalities and electoral areas within each regional district.

⁴⁶ J. Paul & Associates Inc., *Okanagan-Shuswap LRMP* [note 1]; BC Stats., British Columbia Regional District July 1 Population Estimates: 1971-1981, <http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/data/pop/pop/cdpop1.htm>.

⁴⁷ J. Paul & Associates Inc., *Okanagan-Shuswap LRMP* [note 1].

⁴⁸ B.C. Stats, British Columbia Municipal and Regional District Population Estimates, 1996-1999, <http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/data/pop/pop/mun9699e.htm>; B.C. Stats, British Columbia Regional, [note 8].

⁴⁹ J. Paul & Associates Inc., *Okanagan-Shuswap LRMP* [note 1].

⁵⁰ J. Paul & Associates Inc., *Okanagan-Shuswap LRMP* [note 1].

⁵¹ Rob Munro, "Paradise Lost?" *The Kelowna Daily Courier*, January, 22 (1994), pp. A1, B2, B3.

⁵² J. Paul & Associates Inc., *Okanagan-Shuswap LRMP* [note 1].

⁵³ BC Stats, Municipal Population Estimates Highlights 1999, <http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/data/pop/pop/mu99txt.pdf>.

Regional districts attempt to coordinate planning activities in their region by linking together the municipalities and electoral areas that fall within their boundaries.⁵⁴ Each regional district board is made up of directors from each of the electoral areas and directors appointed by each municipality from their own municipal council.⁵⁵ While regional districts develop OCPs for the electoral areas that fall within their boundaries, municipalities produce their own OCPs and determine what happens on the land within their own municipal boundaries. Some planning processes that the provincial government authorizes local governments to undertake, such as Regional Growth Strategies, must be done on a regional basis by regional districts.⁵⁶ Municipalities, however, play a key role in determining whether the regional district will develop a Regional Growth Strategy, are involved in the development of the strategy, and must approve it in the end.⁵⁷

Past and Present Urban and Rural Planning and Land Use

Development patterns in the Okanagan-Shuswap have been typical of many growing Canadian cities. In 1991, Kelowna was described as a city that “never had a plan to regulate any kind of orderly growth,” a city that was “developed by developers and not by city planners.”⁵⁸ A recent Regional District of Central Okanagan report noted, “[t]he predominant pattern of growth has been one of low-density development with large expanses of land devoted to single uses, namely residential areas, commercial strips and shopping malls.”⁵⁹ As the population grew, urban areas expanded out onto adjacent lands overtaking and absorbing agricultural areas and eventually moving up the sides of the valleys.⁶⁰ The general approach to planning in the 1970s and 80s was primarily one of accommodating and encouraging growth without significant concern for principles of sustainability.⁶¹ A 1993 Report prepared for the Okanagan regional districts

⁵⁴ Province of British Columbia, *Local Government in British Columbia* (Victoria: Province of British Columbia, 1997).

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ Ministry of Municipal Affairs, *An Explanatory Guide to B.C.'s Growth Strategies Act* (Victoria: Province of British Columbia, 1995); Province of British Columbia, *Interlinks: Provincial planning initiatives for the Okanagan and Shuswap* (Kelowna: Province of British Columbia, 1996).

⁵⁷ Province of British Columbia, *Interlinks* [note 18].

⁵⁸ Brian Swarbrick, “Okanagan Angst,” *British Columbia Report*, December 16 (1991), pp. 12-14.

⁵⁹ Regional District of Central Okanagan (RDCO), *Shaping Growth in the Central Okanagan: Growth Management Issues: Draft* (Kelowna: Regional District of Central Okanagan, 1997), p. 9.

⁶⁰ Rick Gerezy and Trish Dehnel, “Hillside and Highland Development,” *Planning Institute of B.C. Newsletter*, July, 1996; Regional District of North Okanagan, *Electoral Area “F” Official Community Plan: Bylaw No. 1366* (Vernon: Regional District of North Okanagan, 1996).

⁶¹ Project Interviewee 1, September 1997; North Okanagan Regional District, *Electoral Area “F” Official Community Plan: Bylaw No. 722* (Vernon: North Okanagan Regional District, 1986); Regional District of Central Okanagan, *Electoral area “A” Official Community Plan: Bylaw No. 371* (Kelowna, Regional District of Central Okanagan, 1989); Regional District of Central Okanagan, *Lakeview Area Official Community Plan: Bylaw No. 348* (Kelowna, Regional District of Central Okanagan, 1988); Regional District of Central Okanagan, *Westbank Official Community Plan: Bylaw No. 347* (Kelowna, Regional District of Central Okanagan, 1988).

observed, “[t]he links between human demands and natural systems, such as the effect human consumption of water has on wildlife, fish and vegetation are rarely considered.”⁶² While OCPs in the 1980s started to contain objectives suggesting that development should not damage the natural environment, they seldom contained specific provisions to prevent this damage, except for setting aside parkland and protecting some natural features.⁶³

Greater concerns about growth and the pressures that it places on the natural environment began to appear in Okanagan-Shuswap municipal and regional district planning in the early 1990s. Most OCPs in the early 1990s contained policies on environmentally friendly development, with higher density housing, phased and limited growth areas, green belts and the protection of environmentally sensitive areas.⁶⁴ However, few of the policies in the OCPs were firm commitments. They were instead indications of things that the local government would support or encourage. The local governments were rarely bound to apply their environmental policies.⁶⁵ Moreover, local governments often perceived environmental protection activities to be under the jurisdiction of the provincial government.

It has been suggested that these efforts to incorporate environmental concerns in planning have been nothing more than lip service.⁶⁶ For example, according to Durance in 1992, despite the City of Penticton’s “official claims to be environmentally responsible, no study has ever been done, nor is one contemplated, on how the valley’s humans or wildlife will be affected by increasing population.”⁶⁷ Nevertheless, parks have been created and sensitive areas inventoried

⁶² Larry Pynn, “Requiem for the Okanagan,” *The Vancouver Sun*, July 30 (1994), p. A2. Westland Resource Group, *Charting a Course for the Okanagan: A Review of Issues and Actions*, prepared for Central Okanagan Regional District, North Okanagan Regional District, Okanagan-Similkameen Regional District, November 22, 1993, p. 7.

⁶³ Project Interviewee 1, [note 23]; North Okanagan Regional District, *Electoral Area “F” Official Community Plan: Bylaw No. 722* (Vernon: North Okanagan Regional District, 1986); Regional District of Central Okanagan, *Electoral area “A” Official Community Plan: Bylaw No. 371* (Kelowna, Regional District of Central Okanagan, 1989); Regional District of Central Okanagan, *Lakeview Area Official Community Plan: Bylaw No. 348* (Kelowna, Regional District of Central Okanagan, 1988); Regional District of Central Okanagan, *Westbank Official Community Plan: Bylaw No. 347* (Kelowna, Regional District of Central Okanagan, 1988). Westland.

⁶⁴ City of Kelowna, *City of Kelowna Strategic Plan* (Kelowna: City of Kelowna, 1992); City of Kelowna, *Kelowna’s Official Community Plan: Schedule A By-law 7600* (Kelowna: City of Kelowna, 1995); City of Penticton, *City of Penticton Official Community Plan: Schedule A to Bylaw #93-112* (Penticton, City of Penticton, 1993); Eva Durance, “Vanishing Desert of the Okanagan,” *Borealis*, 11 (1992), pp. 16-20; Regional District of North Okanagan, *Electoral Areas “B” and “C” Official Community Plan: Designation By-Law No. 1173* (Vernon, Regional District of North Okanagan, 1993); Swarbrick, “Okanagan Angst” [note 20]; Regional District of Central Okanagan, *Westbank* [note 25].

⁶⁵ City of Kelowna, *Kelowna’s Official* [note 26]; City of Penticton, *City of Penticton* [note 26]; Regional District of Central Okanagan, *Lakeview Official* [note 25]; Regional District of Central Okanagan, *Westbank* [note 26].

⁶⁶ Durance, “Vanishing Desert” [note 26]; Munro, “Paradise Lost?” [note 13], p. B2. Pynn, “Requiem for” [note 24], p. A2. Rob Munro, “Peace has its costs,” *The Kelowna Daily Courier*, May 25 (1997), p. A10.

⁶⁷ Durance, “Vanishing Desert” [note 26], p. 17.

and provided with some protection.⁶⁸ Development has been directed away from areas that had no sewers and were unsuitable for septic systems. Cities such as Vernon and Regional Districts such as the Regional District of Central Okanagan have taken steps to check urban sprawl by passing bylaws against future development in the crown land beyond existing municipal boundaries.⁶⁹ In 1994, local governments in the Okanagan even established a Council of Councils to address “the impact of growth on sewer, water, transportation and social services.”⁷⁰ Kelowna’s city council has been described as anti-business and Penticton’s city council has established an urban containment boundary and has had to defend itself against accusations of being anti-development.⁷¹ The North Okanagan Regional District is similarly trying to develop an urban containment boundary around the City of Vernon. Regional Districts have developed policies for rural areas that allow no more residential development. Likewise, many local governments in the Okanagan-Shuswap are now undertaking initiatives such as creating environmental offices, natural features committees, water task forces and patrols to encourage conservation, environmentally sensitive area inventories and management plans, wastewater management plans, and recycling programs.⁷² The North Okanagan Regional District has reduced landfilling by more than 50 percent in the last few years.

There are many possible reasons for this increased focus on the sustainability. Provincial legislation, such as the *Municipal Act*, now provides local government with more opportunities to incorporate environmental measures into their OCPs.⁷³ People in the communities are becoming more aware of environmental issues and are demanding that environmental concerns be incorporated into plans and planning decisions.⁷⁴ The motivation to incorporate environmental concerns into planning is also financial.⁷⁵ Servicing and infrastructure for water, sewers and transportation are getting too expensive for local governments to handle, and

⁶⁸ RDCO, *Shaping Growth* [note 21].

⁶⁹ Project Interviewee 2, Regional District of Central Okanagan, September 1997; Rob Munro, “Valley’s future at stake,” *The Kelowna Daily Courier*, January 14 (1994), p. B1.

⁷⁰ Munro, “Valley’s future” [note 31].

⁷¹ Munro, “Peace has” [note 28]; British Columbia Report, “Penticton ain’t a wild west kind of town,” *British Columbia Report*, 8:6 (1996), p. 23; Calvin Sandborn, *Green Space and Growth: Conserving Natural Areas in B.C. Communities* (Victoria: Commission on Resources and Environment, 1996).

⁷² J.P. Squire, “Water wasters hosed,” *The Kelowna Daily Courier*, June 24 (1997), p. A2; Munro, Rob. “Protection sought for marsh,” *The Kelowna Daily Courier*, April 3 (1997), p. A2; Munro, Rob. “Task force eyes water,” *The Kelowna Daily Courier*, July 10 (1997), p. A2; *The Kelowna Daily Courier*, “Knowledge flows from the city,” *The Kelowna Daily Courier*, June 9 (1997), p. A2.

⁷³ City of Kelowna, *Official Community Plan March 1999 Survey: Results Summary*, June 30, 1999; Project Interviewee 5, Ministry of Municipal Affairs, September, 1997; Project Interviewee 7, Environmental Association, September 1998.

⁷⁴ Project Interviewee 5, Ministry of Municipal Affairs [note 36].

⁷⁵ Project Interviewee 1 [note 23].

maintaining current approaches to development threatens to bring further cost increases.⁷⁶ As a result, there is greater political support for planning initiatives that reduce some of these costs.⁷⁷

Concerned citizens are also taking a lead role in planning initiatives in the Okanagan-Shuswap. Citizens in Kelowna are developing a community greenway along Mission Creek.⁷⁸ The South Okanagan Conservation Strategy group has been purchasing and preserving land in endangered south Okanagan ecosystems.⁷⁹ The South Okanagan-Similkameen Stewardship programme has convinced several landowners in habitat areas of threatened species to engage in conservation planning on their properties.⁸⁰

But urban density has not been significantly increased and in the mid to late 1990s at least there seemed to be no strong intentions to limit growth or prevent development.⁸¹ Many municipalities appear to continue to be at least somewhat pro-growth. For example, in 1991 a planner for the City of Penticton stated that Penticton still wants growth, “[b]ut for the first time, we have added environmental concerns to city planning.”⁸² Similarly, when asked if growth was a concern in the South Okanagan a planner responded, “yes, the lack of growth is a concern.”⁸³ In 1994, the mayor of Kelowna stated, “we have to accommodate people when they land on our doorstep. This is not Oregon, where they say, ‘You’re welcome to visit, but don’t stay.’”⁸⁴ In a 1997 presentation to the Okanagan-Shuswap Land and Resource Management Table, representatives from the Town of Osoyoos indicated they wish to accommodate growth by expanding onto the crown land on the town’s West Bench, which contains critical habitat for species that are endangered, vulnerable or threatened in BC. The presenters indicated that “council is aware of, and values the desert ecology” but that “it is better to share, co-exist and blend to achieve the enviable lifestyle of Osoyoos” with the low density that “preserves the small town feel.”⁸⁵

In municipalities that are trying to limit growth, planners face constant pressure from the development community. A planner interviewed for the project stated, “the words social, economic and environmental sustainability might show up in the OCP, and yes, planners might even know what they mean, but here it’s ‘how much can we give away so the developers don’t

⁷⁶ Project Interviewee 1 [note 23]; Project Interviewee 6, Ministry of Municipal Affairs, September, 1997; RDCO, *Shaping Growth* [note 21].

⁷⁷ Project Interviewee 2, RDCO [note 31]; Project Interviewee 6, Ministry of Municipal Affairs [note 38].

⁷⁸ Staff Writer, “Playhouse raffle helps boost Greenway project,” *The Kelowna Daily Courier*, April 17 (1997), p. A2.

⁷⁹ Naturalist OSLRMP Table Representative, Presentation to the OSLRMP Table, February 14, 1997.

⁸⁰ Sandborn, *Green Spaces* [note 33].

⁸¹ RDCO, *Shaping Growth* [note 21].

⁸² Swarbrick, “Okanagan Angst” [note 20];

⁸³ Project Interviewee 3, South Okanagan, February 1998.

⁸⁴ Pynn, “Requiem for” [note 24], p. A2.

⁸⁵ Brad Elenko and John Slater, Town of Osoyoos, Presentation to Okanagan-Shuswap Land and Resource Management Planning Table, December 1997.

think we're jerks and leave town.”⁸⁶ Another planner observed that even if the politicians and planners in the municipality are genuinely trying to plan in accordance with the sustainability principles outlined in the OCP, the development community is always “pushing the envelope” and trying to “go where the land is the cheapest and they can make the biggest returns,” even if it is not in accordance with the OCP.⁸⁷ Politicians, who are often driven by their three year term or in many cases were or are developers themselves, frequently succumb to these pressures and permit development that is inconsistent with OCPs. One project interviewee observed, “Kelowna is run by developers and has been for years.” Planners who tried to implement too many sustainability-promoting changes in the Okanagan have had their hands slapped or have been politely asked to leave.

Thus while planning in the early 1990s started to incorporate principles of sustainability, it appears that many people still felt that continued sprawling development was desirable in the Okanagan-Shuswap. Northcote described this as: “the ‘you can’t stop/must accommodate growth’ syndrome of the present [Okanagan] basin populations.”⁸⁸ Sandborn observed that we have to accept “the reality that development is necessary in order to house a growing population.”⁸⁹ While this may be true, in order to move towards sustainability, it is imperative that this development occur very differently than it has in the past.

Although some people seemed to recognize that growth needed to be done differently to avoid destroying the quality of life in the Okanagan, it is not clear how much this sentiment is being reflected in regional urban and rural land use decisions. The next three chapters will evaluate whether three recent initiatives in the Okanagan-Shuswap, the Regional District of Central Okanagan Regional Growth Strategy (RDCO RGS), the Okanagan-Shuswap Land and Resource Management Planning Community/Crown Interface Zone (OSLRMP CCIZ) and the Salmon River Watershed Roundtable (SRWR) have more effectively, efficiently and equitably incorporated principles of sustainability into urban and rural land use than initiatives of the past. Before these initiatives are evaluated, however, it is important to examine some of the critical challenges that current and future initiatives will have to address.

Critical Challenges for Sustainability

The legacy of ecological and socioeconomic damage from past and present urban and rural land use in the Okanagan-Shuswap poses major challenges for sustainability initiatives in the region. In addition, proponents of new approaches to land use face a set of planning hurdles arising from the prevailing legislative, jurisdictional, financial and attitudinal context.

⁸⁶ Project Interviewee 4, September 1997.

⁸⁷ Project Interviewee 1, [note 23].

⁸⁸ Northcote, “Effects of human” [note 2], p. 132.

⁸⁹ Sandborn, *Green Spaces* [note 33], p 7.

ECOLOGICAL CHALLENGES

Threatened Species and Ecosystems: The semi-arid environment of the Okanagan has given rise to a complex array of terrestrial species. The Okanagan portion of the region is home to many vertebrate, invertebrate and plant species found in few or no other places in BC or Canada and some Okanagan species are unique in the world.⁹⁰ Due primarily to habitat loss and fragmentation from urban and agricultural expansion, but also from overharvesting and competition from introduced species, many of the terrestrial species that inhabit the Okanagan-Shuswap are increasingly at risk.

As of 1999, 36 percent of the provincial red listed vertebrate species (species that are considered extirpated, endangered or threatened) and 57 percent of provincial blue listed vertebrate species (species that are vulnerable) were found in the Okanagan-Shuswap.⁹¹ Most of these species, such as the Grizzly Bear, Spotted Bat, and Western Rattlesnake, are found elsewhere in the world and thus are just at risk of extirpation. Four of these species, the White-tailed Jackrabbit, Burrowing Owl, Short-horned lizard and Sage Grouse, have already been extirpated.⁹² For invertebrates the situation is even more serious. It is estimated that there are over 300 rare and endangered invertebrates in the region, 23 of which occur nowhere else in the world and therefore are at risk of extinction.⁹³ It is also believed that there are many more invertebrates that have not yet been identified.⁹⁴ Vascular plants are also at risk. There are 74 red listed vascular plant species, and 74 blue listed vascular plant species in the Okanagan.⁹⁵ Many of these species occur nowhere else in Canada.⁹⁶ In addition, the Okanagan is considered one of the most endangered biomes in Canada.⁹⁷ There are 33 ecosystems and a multitude of plant complexes in the Okanagan that are considered to be at risk of local extirpation.⁹⁸

The habitat for many of these species, particularly the ones found nowhere else in Canada or the world, is the warm dry grasslands of the Okanagan valley bottoms that are also the most desirable locations for settlement, agriculture and tourism. As a result, 80 percent of the very dry, hot biogeoclimatic xh1 subzone that comprises this habitat is now in private hands and some

⁹⁰ Lincoln, "Red and Blue" [note 3]; Scudder, "Some Basic" [note 3]; Scudder and Smith, "Introduction and" [note 2].

⁹¹ Okanagan-Shuswap Land and Resource Management Plan Process Support Team (OSLRMP PST), *Multiple Accounts Analysis: Base Case Assessment*, 1999.

⁹² Orville Dyer, "Mammals" in Smith I.M. and G.G.E. Scudder, eds., *Assessment of Species Diversity in the Montane Cordillera Ecozone* (Burlington: Ecological Monitoring and Assessment Network, 1998); OSLRMP PST, *Multiple Accounts* [note 53].

⁹³ Scudder, "Some Basic" [note 3].

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁹⁵ OSLRMP PST, *Multiple Accounts* [note 53]; Scudder, "Some Basic" [note 3].

⁹⁶ Westland Resource Group, *Charting a Course* [note 24].

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁹⁸ Munro, "Paradise Lost?" [note 13]; OSLRMP PST, *Multiple Accounts* [note 53]; Westland Resource Group, *Charting a Course* [note 24].

of the remainder is in imminent danger of being lost to development.⁹⁹ The remaining habitat is severely fragmented and is increasingly damaged. By the 1990s, it was estimated that less than 9 percent of the natural grasslands on the valley bottoms were undisturbed by human activity.¹⁰⁰ Many Okanagan-Shuswap species are only at risk of extirpation and have secure populations elsewhere. However, they may still be important from a biodiversity perspective. Because they are at the northern periphery of their range in the Okanagan, they may be genetically important due to their ability to adapt to environmental extremes and therefore may be better able to deal with environmental change than those species in the centre of the population.

Aquatic species in the Okanagan are also at risk. Growth in the Okanagan-Shuswap has placed freshwater and anadromous fish stocks in danger. While salmon stock aggregates are doing relatively well, some individual stocks are facing serious problems.¹⁰¹ Sockeye salmon once spawned all the way up the Columbia River into Lake Okanagan. However the Vaseaux Lake dam built for irrigation and flood control in 1915 eliminated northern spawning grounds and Sockeye numbers have declined dramatically.¹⁰² Sockeye in the Okanagan River below Vaseaux Lake have dropped from 38,000 spawners in the 1980s to less than 1000.¹⁰³ Kokanee, which are lake dwelling non-migratory populations of Sockeye salmon, once numbered in the millions in the Okanagan basin. However, stream spawning Kokanee in Okanagan Lake and its tributaries have dropped from a million fish in 1970 to 30,000 to 100,000 fish per year, hitting a low of 13,000 returns in 1998.¹⁰⁴ There have also been critical declines in some freshwater stocks such as rainbow and bull trout.¹⁰⁵

Many of these declines can be directly linked to loss and damage of habitat from urban and rural pressures, including the removal of riparian vegetation, water withdrawals, the diversion, straightening and channelization of tributaries and rivers, and the increase of impervious surfaces from urban development, which change stream hydrology, cut off habitat areas, and increase

⁹⁹ Lincoln, "Red and Blue" [note 3]; Scudder, "Some Basic" [note 3]; Scudder and Smith, "Introduction and" [note 2].

¹⁰⁰ Richard J. Cannings and Eva Durance, "Human Use of Natural Resources in The South Okanagan and Lower Similkameen Valleys," in Smith I.M. and G.G.E. Scudder, eds., *Assessment of Species Diversity in the Montane Cordillera Ecozone* (Burlington: Ecological Monitoring and Assessment Network, 1998).

¹⁰¹ Lydia Jaremovic, "Okanagan-Shuswap LRMP Presentation: Salmon Resources," *Okanagan-Shuswap LRMP Toolkit Document*, Department of Fisheries and Oceans, December, 14, 1997.

¹⁰² Cannings and Durance, "Human Use" [note 62].

¹⁰³ Jarmovic, "Okanagan-Shuswap" [note 63].

¹⁰⁴ Cannings and Durance, "Human Use" [note 62]. Barry McDivitt, "Volunteers For Kokanee," *B.C. Outdoors Magazine*, April (1994), p. 14; Northcote, "Effects of human" [note 2]; Westland Resource Group, *Charting a Course* [note 24].

¹⁰⁵ Bruce Shepherd, and Brian Chan, "Okanagan-Shuswap LRMP Presentation: Fisheries Resource and Special Interests," *Okanagan-Shuswap LRMP Toolkit Document*, Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks, December 14, 1997; Westland Resource Group, *Charting a Course* [note 24].

stream temperature and erosion.¹⁰⁶ According to Shepherd and Chan: “over 90 percent of the historic stream spawning habitats has been lost” and of “the <10 percent remaining, only about half is usable by fish under current flow regimes.”¹⁰⁷ Over 85 percent of the region’s wetlands have been filled or drained.¹⁰⁸ Fish are also affected by the multitudes of human activities in the lakes and along its shorelines, which in most areas of Okanagan Lake are 80 percent developed.¹⁰⁹

Water Quantity and Quality Concerns: Growth has created water quantity and quality concerns throughout the Okanagan-Shuswap. Despite the presence of many lakes, the Okanagan is a relatively water poor region because of the arid environment, which results in very little surface run-off.¹¹⁰ Many of the streams of the Okanagan-Shuswap are over-committed with water licences issued for the “diversion of more water than exists in the stream in a normal year”.¹¹¹ In urban areas in the dryer parts of the Okanagan, “demand often exceeds available water,” which creates many conflicts.¹¹² Increasing reliance on water from Okanagan Lake and on groundwater is reducing stream flow even further.¹¹³ Part of the problem of water quantity may lie in usage. Kelowna households consume on average 54.4 cubic metres of water per month, while the national average is 30 and Vernon households utilize only 25.5 cubic metres.¹¹⁴

Water quantity is expected to be an increasing problem in the future. Municipalities in the Greater Vernon area may have already exhausted their best water supply source of Kalamalka Lake and do not believe that it “can provide for additional growth under the current practice of combined domestic and irrigation systems.”¹¹⁵ Since irrigation for agriculture still consumes the largest share of the water in the region, as the population grows reallocating irrigation water for domestic use may become a major issue.¹¹⁶

Water quality is also a concern. A cryptosporidium outbreak in Mission Creek in 1996 left Kelowna’s water undrinkable for over two months. Water quality in mainstem rivers and lakes

¹⁰⁶ Jaremovic, “Okanagan-Shuswap” [note 63]; Munro, “Paradise Lost?” [note 13]; Northcote, “Effects of human” [note 2].

¹⁰⁷ Shepherd and Chan, “Okanagan-Shuswap” [note 67], p. 2.

¹⁰⁸ Munro, “Paradise Lost?” [note 13]; Northcote, “Effects of human” [note 2].

¹⁰⁹ Jaremovic, “Okanagan-Shuswap” [note 63]; Northcote, “Effects of human” [note 2].

¹¹⁰ Don McKee and Bob Petrie, “Okanagan-Shuswap LRMP: Water Allocation,” *Okanagan-Shuswap LRMP Toolkit Document*, February 14, 1997.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

¹¹² Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks, “Okanagan Shuswap LRMP: Notes on Hydrology and Stream Function,” *Okanagan-Shuswap LRMP Toolkit Document*, Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks, February 14, 1997.

¹¹³ Munro, “Paradise Lost?” [note 13].

¹¹⁴ Rob Munro, “It’s time to stop waste,” *The Kelowna Daily Courier*, July 2, 1997, p. A10.

¹¹⁵ Agris Berzins, Jack H. Lee and Eric A. Jackson, “Combined Water Supply Wastewater Utilization Planning in Vernon, BC,” *Innovation*, May, 1997.

¹¹⁶ Westland Resources Group, *Charting a Course* [note 24].

in the region is generally good, although some areas have failed to meet provincial water quality standards for many years.¹¹⁷ Many Okanagan cities have high quality sewage treatment systems, and have reduced the loading of primary nutrients expelled into Okanagan Lake over the last few decades.¹¹⁸ However, phosphorus loadings in the lakes remain high due to run-off from spray effluent sites and from septic systems in development areas with soil unsuited for septic.¹¹⁹ There are also concerns regarding the effects of agricultural and ranching run-off and erosion. Unfortunately, due to funding limitations the provincial government has almost no water quality data for upland crown waters and groundwater.¹²⁰ Thus, “an assessment of the overall water quality in the region cannot be made.”¹²¹ Future growth will stretch the capacity of lakes and rivers in the region to absorb sewage and other pollutants even further.

Air Quality Concerns: Air quality is also becoming a concern in particular areas of the Okanagan-Shuswap, such as Lumby, Vernon and Kelowna, due to the presence of a generally stable air mass vulnerable to low level thermal inversions.¹²² High levels of particulates have been recorded in the northern parts of the Okanagan-Shuswap, while ground-level ozone from automobile exhaust is becoming a problem in the central and southern part of the region.¹²³

All of these ecological challenges have implications for sustainability. Wildlife, fish and ecosystems are critical components and indicators of biodiversity. Water resources are important to human populations and to the wildlife, fish and ecosystems of the region. Air quality likewise affects human and non-human populations. Many of these ecological pressures will lead to socioeconomic impacts, such as increased water treatment costs and health problems. Moreover, these are just the ecological impacts that can be readily identified with current scientific research capacity and funding. It is very likely that important factors that cannot be so readily measured, such as the structure and functioning of many ecosystems, have also been affected by urban and rural activities in the Okanagan-Shuswap. Likewise, there are many impacts of urban and rural land use in the Okanagan-Shuswap that extend beyond local ecosystems, such as contributions to greenhouse gases.

¹¹⁷ Tim Forty, “Water Quality: Pollution Prevention Presentation to the Okanagan/Shuswap LRMP,” *Okanagan-Shuswap LRMP Toolkit Document*, Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks, February 14, 1997; Northcote, “Effects of human” [note 2].

¹¹⁸ Tim Forty, “Liquid waste management - the Okanagan experience,” *Water Quality International*, 1 (1995), pp. 14-16.; Forty, “Water Quality” [note 79]; Munro, “Paradise Lost?” [note 13]; Northcote, “Effects of human” [note 2]; Pynn, “Requiem for” [note 24].

¹¹⁹ Forty, “Liquid waste” [note 80]; Forty, “Water Quality” [note 79]; Munro, “Paradise Lost?” [note 13]; Northcote, “Effects of human” [note 2]; Pynn, “Requiem for” [note 24]; Westland Resources Group, *Charting a Course* [note 24].

¹²⁰ Forty, “Water Quality” [note 79].

¹²¹ Forty, “Water Quality” [note 79], p. 11.

¹²² J. Paul & Associates Inc., Okanagan-Shuswap LRMP [note 1].

¹²³ Westland Resources Group, *Charting a Course* [note 24].

SOCIOECONOMIC CHALLENGES

Increased Infrastructure, Servicing and Housing Costs: Low density urban and rural development has also brought with it socioeconomic costs, such as increased servicing and infrastructure costs for roads, sewer, water, and emergency services and rising housing costs.¹²⁴ Leap-frogging Agriculture Land Reserve (ALR) lands to extend sewer and water to new developments has become very expensive for local governments.¹²⁵ These costs are absorbing a growing portion of local government budgets and limit local governments' ability to carry out other initiatives. As a result, the costs are increasingly being passed on to taxpayers.¹²⁶

Housing costs are also rising in the Okanagan due to increased demand from growth, rising servicing costs, higher development cost charges and standards, and development in less suitable areas such as hillsides.¹²⁷ Increased housing costs create problems of housing affordability and equity and can ultimately force people with lower incomes out of the area.¹²⁸

Pressure on Agricultural Lands: Growth has placed increasing pressure on agricultural lands both within and outside of the provincial Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR). Due to the climate, the Okanagan-Shuswap has rich agricultural opportunities and contains five percent of the province's agricultural land, much of it prime class 1 to 3 agricultural land, making the Okanagan-Shuswap ideal for fruit and vegetable growing, including grapes for wine making. It also has significant ranching activity. Because large portions of agricultural land are located in the valley floors near urban centres, there are major residential and commercial development pressures on the land. For example, in Kelowna in 1993, 45.31 percent of the land within the city limits was ALR land.¹²⁹ Between 1971 and 1986, 26 percent of the land utilized for farming in the region was converted to other uses.¹³⁰

The ALR was established by the provincial government in 1973 to preserve the agricultural land rapidly being lost to development.¹³¹ Unfortunately, a significant amount of agricultural land was lost to urban activities and other nonagricultural uses before the creation of the ALR. Since then, much non-ALR agricultural land has been developed and there are increasing pressures on the remaining land. ALR land is also under pressure. There are currently 221,237

¹²⁴ Project Interviewee 1, [note 23]; RDCO, *Shaping Growth* [note 21].

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*

¹²⁶ RDCO, *Shaping Growth* [note 21].

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*

¹²⁸ City of Kelowna, *Kelowna's Official* [note 26].

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*

¹³⁰ M. J. Pidwirny, "Reduction of Biodiversity in the Thompson-Okanagan," *Land Use and Environment Change in the Thompson-Okanagan, Living Landscapes: Thompson-Okanagan, Past, Present and Future*, 1996, <http://royal.okanagan.bc.ca/mpidwirn/plantsandanimals/plantsandanimals.html#e>; Westland Resources Group, *Charting a Course* [note 24].

¹³¹ Derek DeCloet, "A Growing Revolt against the ALR (Agricultural Land Reserve): Okanagan farmers say broken promises invalidate land freeze." *British Columbia Report*, 8:22 (1997), pp. 14-15; Western Report, "Last legs for the land freeze? Farmers rally to sue B.C. government for \$10 billion" *Western Report*, 10:21 (1995), p. 16.

ha of ALR land in the region.¹³² The Westland *Charting a Course* report prepared for the Okanagan regional districts in 1993 noted that “[t]here is a body of opinion that considers the ALR a holding zone for future urban development, particularly in the urban fringe areas.”¹³³ This has resulted in many applications for land removals from the ALR in the Okanagan-Shuswap.

About ten percent of the land of the ALR land in the Okanagan-Shuswap has been removed from the ALR, compared to two percent provincially, and the numbers of applications for removals have increased over the last several years.¹³⁴ In addition, due to the expectation of future removals from the ALR, the price of the land has increased beyond the economic returns it generates under farm use. This makes it difficult for new farmers to purchase and under the rules of the ALR the land cannot be sold in smaller portions.¹³⁵ In recent years, the economic returns on many farming operations have become marginal and some farmers have been forced to sell everything to wealthy hobby farmers causing the land to be put out of production.¹³⁶

Unsuitable Development Areas: Expanding urban populations and the presence of the ALR has caused development to begin to spill over the edges of the valleys and up the surrounding hillsides.¹³⁷ Some cities, including Penticton and Osoyoos, have very little vacant land remaining on the valley floor and as their population grows, pressures to expand urban areas up the valley hillsides will increase.¹³⁸ Many of these hillsides are not only ecologically important red and blue listed species habitat, but also potential slide and fire zones. As a result, people are increasingly living in areas vulnerable to natural hazards.

Growing Transportation Problems: Congestion is becoming noticeable on the major route through Westbank and Kelowna and particularly on the bridge into Kelowna.¹³⁹ Other spots throughout the region become highly congested in the summer.¹⁴⁰ Traffic congestion negatively affects quality of life in the region and may harm the local economy, particularly tourism. In a recent City of Kelowna survey, Kelowna residents indicated that dealing with traffic congestion was their number one priority for the spending of tax dollars.¹⁴¹ The Okanagan Valley Transportation Planning process has highlighted that there will be many future costs associated

¹³² J. Paul & Associates Inc., *Okanagan-Shuswap LRMP* [note 1].

¹³³ Westland Resources Group, *Charting a Course* [note 24], p. 16.

¹³⁴ J. Paul & Associates Inc., *Okanagan-Shuswap LRMP* [note 1].

¹³⁵ DeCloet, “A Growing revolt” [note 93], p. 14; Kevin S. Hanna, “Regulation and land-use conservation: A case study of the British Columbia Agricultural Land Reserve,” *Journal of Soil and Water Conservation*, May-June (1997), pp. 166-170; Paul Lidgate, “ALR: is it a burden or a blessing?” *Saanich News*, Sept 26 (1997), pp. 1, 4.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*

¹³⁷ Gerzey and Dehnel, “Hillside and” [note 22].

¹³⁸ Elenko and Slater, Presentation to [note 47]; Project Interviewee 8, September, 1997.

¹³⁹ Okanagan Valley Transportation Plan, *Okanagan Valley Transportation Plan Project Update #1*, Kelowna June, 1996.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁴¹ City of Kelowna, *Official Community* [note 35].

with transportation infrastructure in the Central Okanagan, particularly if future development is not balanced on both sides of Okanagan Lake.

General Amenity Loss: There has been a general decline in amenity values in the Okanagan-Shuswap region. Shrinking green space, automobile strip development, walled communities, heritage loss, and the increasing traffic of motorboats and jet-skis on the lakes have all contributed to the increasing loss of amenity in the Okanagan. These amenity losses have social impacts on community livability and quality of life, and economic effects on tourism and other industries.

The region's socioeconomic pressures and challenges have implications for longer-term sustainability. Rising servicing and housing costs and development in unsafe areas create socioeconomic equity concerns which have negative implications for sustainability. The loss of agricultural land weakens the economic potential and self-sufficiency of the region, and reduces global food production capacity in general. General amenity loss and increased transportation congestion decrease quality of life for everyone and will have long term implications for the economic health of the region. As with the ecological challenges, the list of socioeconomic challenges provided may not begin to address the wide range of socioeconomic challenges related to sustainability faced by the region, such as issues of poverty, health and political inequities. The omission of these challenges is not in any way intended to suggest that they are not important, but rather that they are not as intimately connected to urban and rural land use planning in the region at the current time.

PLANNING CHALLENGES

In addition to the multitude of interlinked ecological and socioeconomic challenges, the region faces some overarching planning challenges that hinder initiatives seeking changes in the way urban and rural land use is carried out.

Lack of Appropriate Legislation: When it comes to the environment, much existing provincial legislation, including BC's *Municipal Act* and the *Growth Strategies Act*, is enabling – it allows for local governments to undertake many initiatives to protect the environment in their official community plans and bylaws, but does not force local governments to act.¹⁴² A recent government publication observed: “local governments are under no obligation to use their authority to protect the environment.”¹⁴³ Local governments have traditionally regarded environmental protection as being under the jurisdiction of the province. Moreover, the province's legislative base has significant gaps and weaknesses for urban and rural land use planning. Sandborn noted, “[m]uch of the legislation governing land use in British Columbia originated at a time when our natural resources seemed limitless, and when the facilitation of

¹⁴² Lanarc Consultants Ltd., *Stewardship Bylaws: A Guide for Local Government* (Victoria: Province of British Columbia, 1996); Ministry of Municipal Affairs, *An Explanatory Guide to B.C.'s Growth Strategies Act* (Victoria: Province of British Columbia, 1995).

¹⁴³ Lanarc Consultants Ltd. *Stewardship Bylaws* [note 232], forward.

development was accepted as an unqualified social objective.”¹⁴⁴ Water licensing and endangered species legislation provide only limited tools for ecological protection, and groundwater legislation is non-existent. Local governments in some cases do not even have the regulatory instruments to implement some aspects of their OCPs. The provincial government has, however, attempted to increase the environmental protection options available to local governments with recent legislation such as the *Fish Protection Act*, and the *Local Government Statutes Amendments Act*.

Conflicting Legislation, Policies and Incentives: Some provincial laws, policies and incentives are in conflict with each other and allow for continued ecological damage. For example, while the province is advocating ecological protection, in 1997 it asked its crown land disposition agency, WLC Developments, now known as the BC Assets and Land Corporation, to meet certain revenue targets for the sale of crown land.¹⁴⁵ These revenue targets could encourage increases in crown land disposal, possibly for development purposes. As noted above, ALR legislation protects farmland, but also results in agricultural land being sold to hobby farmers.¹⁴⁶ Local government bylaws, policies and incentive systems contain similar conflicts.¹⁴⁷

Fragmentation of Jurisdiction: A critical challenge is coordination of the multitude of federal, provincial and local government and private agencies involved in managing land use in the Okanagan-Shuswap. For example, so many agencies have a responsibility for or an interest in water, and their resources for communication are so limited, that often nobody knows what the others are doing.¹⁴⁸ Municipal governments in BC have significant independence compared to municipalities in most other North American jurisdictions. This fragments jurisdiction even further, because regional and provincial governments have limited authority to require municipal governments to act. Task forces and studies over the years have emphasized the need for the local governments of the region to work together to address the challenges of growth.¹⁴⁹ But the local governments have had difficulties engaging joint planning.¹⁵⁰ Lack of resources for coordination and disagreements regarding desirable approaches may continue to hinder cooperation in the future.

Existing Patterns of Land Use: Existing patterns of land use create great difficulties for planning initiatives to foster sustainability. Most existing urban areas in the Okanagan-Shuswap are already low-density sprawls. While infilling can help to increase housing density, much of the existing sprawl, which encourages automobile use and occupies former agricultural land and ecosystems, will not likely ever be eliminated. Moreover, even though residents often support

¹⁴⁴ Sandborn, *Green Spaces* [note 33], p. 50.

¹⁴⁵ Project Interviewee 8, [note 100].

¹⁴⁶ DeCloet, “A Growing revolt” [note 93].

¹⁴⁷ RDCO, *Shaping Growth* [note 21].

¹⁴⁸ Westland Resources Group, *Charting a Course* [note 24].

¹⁴⁹ Pynn, “Requiem for” [note 24]; Westland Resources Group, *Charting a Course* [note 24].

¹⁵⁰ Project Interviewee 6, Ministry of Municipal Affairs [note 38]; Pynn, “Requiem for” [note 24].

densification in principle, they tend to oppose it in their own neighbourhood.¹⁵¹ Over 12 percent of the total land base in the Okanagan-Shuswap, including 80 percent of the endangered grassland biogeoclimatic subzone, is privately owned and activities on private land contribute to loss of species, water quality problems and general ecosystem damage both on the private land itself and on the surrounding crown land.¹⁵² Unless governments are prepared to regulate activities on private land, protecting and rehabilitating threatened ecosystems may be very difficult, and communities may have to find innovative ways to change behaviour on private land.¹⁵³

Ingrained Public Attitudes and Incentive Systems: Combating ingrained attitudes of members of the public and politicians is very difficult. While many people in the region are very concerned about sustainability and undertake actions to help preserve and restore ecosystems,¹⁵⁴ many others seem to believe that growth is inherently good in part because the costs of growth are simply not as evident as they are in places such as the Lower Mainland of BC. Moreover, while the environment often emerges as a key concern for residents in surveys,¹⁵⁵ people do not seem willing to change their lifestyles to protect it.

Preferences for single family dwellings and automobile use are deeply held. In a recent survey conducted by the City of Kelowna, residents indicated that they supported higher density housing and alternative transportation.¹⁵⁶ However, when asked what they personally would prefer in terms of housing and transportation choices, 83 percent indicated that their preferred form of housing was a single detached home and 63 percent indicated that they would not consider using a form of transportation other than their personal automobile to get to work.¹⁵⁷ Durance likewise noted,

Seldom do people consider the non-human residents and the land itself. Arguments for saving wetlands as wildlife habitat are met with general incomprehension or outright hostility. The opposition is particularly strong if protected means the land can't be drained or used for agriculture or housing.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵¹ Westland Resources Group, *Charting a Course* [note 24].

¹⁵² Project Interviewee 9, Ministry of Forests, October, 1997.

¹⁵³ Sandborn, *Green Spaces* [note 33].

¹⁵⁴ Steve MacNaull, "Parks march falls flat," *The Kelowna Daily Courier*, April 20 (1997), p. A1; Steve MacNaull, "Worker's won't park it," *The Kelowna Daily Courier*, June 9 (1997), p. A1. Bailey, "Little Sahara" [note 94]; Rob Munro, "Work starting on park along Mission Creek," *The Kelowna Daily Courier*, July 4 (1997), p. A3; Okanagan Saturday Editor, "Society Praised for saving Valley's Beauty," *The Okanagan Saturday*, June 7 (1997), p. A6; Chuck Poulsen, "Crews tend to creek," *The Kelowna Daily Courier*, April 7 (1997), p. A3.

¹⁵⁵ City of Kelowna, *City of Kelowna* [note 26].

¹⁵⁶ City of Kelowna, *Official Community* [note 35].

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁸ Durance, "Vanishing Desert" [note 26], p. 18.

Many of the threatened and endangered species in the Okanagan, such as invertebrates, rattlesnakes, toads and bats are seen as unappealing or dangerous and may be unlikely to generate any major public movement or even support to save their habitats.¹⁵⁹ Politicians often have a short term horizon and are frequently unwilling to support bylaws, plans or policies that impose restrictions on development for fear of making themselves unpopular with the public and negatively affecting economic growth.

Overriding Initiatives: The effects of planning initiatives in the region may also be affected by other government initiatives, such as the First Nations treaty negotiations. For example, several large tracts of land on the outskirts of Kelowna are being claimed by the Westbank First Nation, who have indicated that they propose to develop the areas, which could further contribute to urban sprawl and ecosystem damage and is something over which the local governments and people in the region may have little control.¹⁶⁰

Cuts to Local Government and Ministry Budgets: Local governments and government ministry offices are operating with increasingly limited budgets.¹⁶¹ The provincial government cut transfer payments to local governments in 1996, exacerbating the problem.¹⁶² Staff at both levels of government are overworked and resources are often not available to collect data, do environmental inventories or review existing legislative options, much less to begin developing and implementing plans for sustainability.¹⁶³ At the same time, many local governments are faced with increasing downloading of responsibilities and costs from the provincial government, which stretch their resources even further. While many people argue that engaging in long-term sustainable land use is less expensive than current practices and many municipalities are engaging in more compact high-density development for financial reasons, there are costs associated with the transition to sustainable land use. Improving public transit, restoring damaged ecosystems, conducting environmental assessments and imposing restrictions on commercial and industry operations that make the municipality imposing restrictions a less attractive place to operate, all may have long-term financial benefits. But they impose short term costs that cash strapped local governments have difficulty paying for.

Thus the Okanagan-Shuswap region faces a multitude of ecological, socioeconomic and planning challenges associated with past and present urban and rural land use activities, particularly as the population of the region continues to grow. Many of these challenges are highly interlinked. Sometimes addressing one challenge could help address others. For

¹⁵⁹ Westland Resources Group, *Charting a Course* [note 24].

¹⁶⁰ Roger Graham, Treaty Negotiator, Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs, *Presentation to the OSLRMP Table*, March 17, 1997; Westbank First Nation Treaty Negotiations Map, *Areas of Interest for Community Development Lands, Mission and Hydraulic Creek*, April 1997; Westbank First Nation Treaty Negotiations Map, *Areas of Interest for Community Development Lands, Trepanier and Powers Creek*, April 1997.

¹⁶¹ Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, "Local Government Funding Restructured as Part of Financial Plan," *News Release*, November 26, 1996; Sandborn, *Green Spaces* [note 33].

¹⁶² *Ibid.*

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*

example, increasing housing density could help resolve challenges of threatened species, high infrastructure costs, and traffic congestion. In other cases, competing challenges must be addressed. For example, limiting development or ensuring that development is done to certain environmental standards could negatively affect housing affordability. Likewise, the overarching planning challenges make addressing some of the ecological and socioeconomic challenges very difficult. The next three chapters will evaluate how effectively, efficiently and equitably three initiatives in the Okanagan-Shuswap have addressed some of these challenges.

3 Case Study: RDCO Growth Strategy Development

The Initiative

The Regional District of Central Okanagan (RDCO) initiated development of a Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) in 1996.¹⁶⁴ In 1999, it produced an RGS entitled, the *Growth Management Strategy for the Regional District of the Central Okanagan*, in the form of a draft bylaw containing an overall vision, objectives and policies for regional growth management. Work is still underway to refine the bylaw, to develop issue papers for the key issue areas identified in the bylaw, and to negotiate implementation agreements between the regional district and its member municipalities and electoral areas. These anticipated steps will outline more concrete guiding principles and strategies for achieving the vision, objectives and policies outlined in the RGS.

The Regional District of Central Okanagan encompasses three municipalities including Kelowna, Peachland and Lake Country. It also includes three regional district electoral areas, Lakeview and Westside, Westbank and Ellison, and Joe Rich. The draft RGS was developed by a Growth Management Steering Committee, which included staff and political representatives from RDCO, the City of Kelowna, the District of Peachland, the District of Lake Country and the Westbank First Nation, plus political representatives from each of the three RDCO electoral areas. An interagency advisory committee, consisting of provincial agencies with a major role in land use activities, and other agencies including irrigation districts, school boards and health districts, also provided input into the RGS development.

The Central Okanagan is one of the highest population growth areas in the province. Concerns regarding the potential impacts of this growth on the fragile arid environment of the Central Okanagan, the agricultural land base, water quality and quantity, the availability of affordable housing and the overall quality of life are key issues shaping the RGS discussions. The desire to encourage continued economic development and maintain existing economic prosperity were also key factors influencing the RGS process.

Background

The BC provincial *Growth Strategies Act*, enacted in 1995, encourages regional districts to develop Regional Growth Strategies in cooperation with the municipal governments within their boundaries.¹⁶⁵ According to the provincial government, the purpose of the *Growth Strategies Act* is to “promote human settlement that is socially, economically and environmentally healthy,

¹⁶⁴ Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, “Around the Regions,” *Taking Action: Growth Strategies in B.C.*, September 1996.

¹⁶⁵ Ministry of Municipal Affairs, *An Explanatory Guide to B.C.’s Growth Strategies Act* (Victoria: Province of British Columbia, 1995).

and that makes efficient use of public facilities and services, land and other resources.”¹⁶⁶ A Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) is a “regional vision that commits affected municipalities and regional districts to a course of action to meet common social, economic and environmental objectives.”¹⁶⁷ Municipal governments within the regional district play a key role in the development of the strategy and have to approve it in the end.¹⁶⁸ Once an RGS has been approved in the form of a regional district bylaw, all the OCPs developed by municipalities in the regional district must conform to the goals set out in the RGS.¹⁶⁹

The *Growth Strategies Act*, now incorporated into the *Municipal Act*, is enabling legislation. It enables regional districts in the province to develop RGSs, but does not require them to do so. The *Growth Strategies Act* enables the provincial Cabinet to require a regional district to develop a regional growth strategy where Cabinet feels the conditions of growth or change warrant such a requirement.¹⁷⁰ But again, whether or not such action is taken is left to Cabinet’s discretion. This provision has not been utilized to date.

The Okanagan, the Lower Mainland and the east coast of Vancouver Island were named by the provincial government as the three key areas of the province for implementing Regional Growth Strategy initiatives under the provincial *Growth Strategies Act*.¹⁷¹ Most of the regional districts in the three key areas have developed, or are in the process of developing, a Regional Growth Strategy. In the Lower Mainland, the Greater Vancouver Regional District (GVRD) was the first regional district to complete an RGS in 1996 with the development of its Livable Region Strategic Plan.¹⁷² The Fraser Valley Regional District and the Squamish-Lillooet Regional District in the Lower Mainland have also initiated the RGS process.¹⁷³ On Vancouver Island, the Regional District of Nanaimo completed its RGS in 1997 and the Capital Regional District (CRD), started developing its RGS in 1996 and expects to be finished in 2000.¹⁷⁴ In the Thompson Nicola region of the province that is sometimes considered to be part of the Okanagan, the regional district is also in the process of completing an RGS.¹⁷⁵

¹⁶⁶ Regional District of Central Okanagan (RDCO), *Growth Management Strategy Framework for the Central Okanagan*, Revised Draft, February 23, 1999, p.3.

¹⁶⁷ Ministry of Municipal Affairs, *An Explanatory Guide* [note 2], p. 2.

¹⁶⁸ Province of British Columbia, *Interlinks: Provincial planning initiatives for the Okanagan and Shuswap* (Kelowna: Province of British Columbia, 1996).

¹⁶⁹ Province of British Columbia, *Interlinks* [note 5].

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁷¹ Ministry of Municipal Affairs, *An Explanatory Guide* [note 2]; Project Interviewee 6, Ministry of Municipal Affairs, September, 1997.

¹⁷² Greater Vancouver Regional District, *Livable Region Strategic Plan*, (Vancouver: Greater Vancouver Regional District: 1996).

¹⁷³ Ministry of Municipal Affairs, *The Regions*, March 2000, <http://www.marh.gov.bc.ca/GROWTH/mainland.html>.

¹⁷⁴ Regional District of Nanaimo, *Growth Management Plan for the Regional District of Nanaimo* (Nanaimo: Regional District of Nanaimo, 1997); Capital Regional District, *Frequently Asked Questions on the Regional Growth Strategy Project*, August, 1998, <http://www.crd.bc.ca/rgs-main/faqs.htm>.

¹⁷⁵ Ministry of Municipal Affairs, *The Regions*, March 2000, <http://www.marh.gov.bc.ca/GROWTH/ovalley.html>.

The provincial government had initially hoped that the three regional districts of the Okanagan would work together to produce a joint RGS, since so many of the growth and environmental pressures in the Okanagan, such as water quantity and quality, air pollution, and transportation, are of a valley wide nature.¹⁷⁶ Many reports on the Okanagan, including the Final Report of the 1974 Canada-British Columbia Okanagan Basin Agreement, and the 1993 Westland Charting a Course for the Okanagan report, have emphasized the need for the regional districts to work together.¹⁷⁷ However, the regional districts' efforts to produce a joint growth strategy were short-lived. As a result, the Regional District of Central Okanagan (RDCO) decided to push ahead with its own RGS, which it started in 1996. While the three other regional districts, and the municipalities within them, have incorporated growth management and environmental considerations into their OCPs, none of them has developed an RGS to date.¹⁷⁸

The other regional districts offered various reasons for not preparing their own growth strategies. The Okanagan-Similkameen Regional District (OSRD) saw the cost of doing a growth strategy as a critical barrier to their participation.¹⁷⁹ OSRD has more recently indicated that it does plan to initiate a growth strategy some time in the future, but no firm date has been set.¹⁸⁰ The North Okanagan Regional District (NORD), initially indicated that it had already done sufficient comprehensive growth planning, with its Greater Vernon Settlement Strategy and North Okanagan Regional Water Commission, and was not interested in developing an official provincial growth strategy.¹⁸¹ More recently, however, NORD hired a consultant to prepare a report identifying growth issues that need to be addressed and outline how the regional district can develop an RGS that incorporates work that has already been completed in the regional district to manage growth.¹⁸² The regional district board will decide whether to proceed with the growth strategy after they have analyzed the report.¹⁸³ The Columbia-Shuswap Regional District in the north did not see the need for a growth strategy, because, aside from Salmon Arm, it is not a high growth area, and it did not think it had the background to carry out a growth strategy

¹⁷⁶ Project Interviewee 6, Ministry of Municipal Affairs, [note 8].

¹⁷⁷ Canada-British Columbia Consultative Board, *Technical supplement to the final report: Canada-British Columbia Okanagan Basin Agreement*. (Penticton: Office of the Study Director, 1974). Project Interviewee 6, Ministry of Municipal Affairs, [note 8]; Larry Pynn, "Requiem for the Okanagan," *The Vancouver Sun*, July 30 (1994), p. A2. Westland Resource Group, *Charting a Course for the Okanagan: A Review of Issues and Actions*, prepared for Central Okanagan Regional District, North Okanagan Regional District, Okanagan-Similkameen Regional District, November 22, 1993.

¹⁷⁸ Ministry of Municipal Affairs, *The Regions* [note 12]; Project Interviewee 6, Ministry of Municipal Affairs, [note 8]; Province of British Columbia, *Interlinks* [note 5].

¹⁷⁹ Project Interviewee 6, Ministry of Municipal Affairs, [note 8].

¹⁸⁰ Okanagan-Shuswap Regional Districts, "Community/Crown Interface Area," *Presentation to the Okanagan-Shuswap Land and Resource Management Plan Table*, October 17, 1997.

¹⁸¹ Project Interviewee 6, Ministry of Municipal Affairs, [note 8].

¹⁸² Ministry of Municipal Affairs, *The Regions* [note 12].

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*

without money from the province for training.¹⁸⁴ The fact that the Central Okanagan is the only regional district in the Okanagan-Shuswap carrying out a growth strategy to date may also simply be because growth related problems, such as traffic congestion, air pollution and sprawl infrastructures costs, are more obvious in the Central Okanagan than they are in the other regional districts at the moment.¹⁸⁵

Development of the RDCO Growth Strategy

The RDCO RGS was an ambitious project when it started in 1996. Three early objectives of the RDCO RGS process were:

- to develop a vision of what the regional district will look like in the future;
- to develop a consensus of (sic) where growth will occur in the region over the next 20 years;
- to develop an integrated approach to regional planning and growth management initiatives which considers the environmental, economic and social implications of development.¹⁸⁶

The initial schedule for the development of the RGS was very optimistic. Terms of reference and a work programme were to be developed by September 1996.¹⁸⁷ Background reports and inventories were to be completed by January 1997.¹⁸⁸ Trend analysis and scenario development were to be finished by September 1997, with the development of the final implementation strategy and monitoring process and documentation to be completed by December 1997.¹⁸⁹ This schedule proved impossible to meet.

In September 1996 an information package describing the RGS was distributed to households in the region.¹⁹⁰ Over the course of 1996 and early 1997, RDCO staff worked to develop background materials for the development of the RGS, including a growth management strategy work program, terms of reference, and overview report.¹⁹¹ In March 1997, RDCO asked the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing to appoint provincial members to its

¹⁸⁴ Project Interviewee 6, Ministry of Municipal Affairs, [note 8].

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁶ Regional District of Central Okanagan (RDCO), *The Growth Management Strategy for the Central Okanagan Regional District (CORD) Update*, June 1996, p.2.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁰ Province of British Columbia, *Interlinks* [note 5].

¹⁹¹ Regional District of Central Okanagan (RDCO), *Growth Management Strategy Work Program 1997-1998*, Revised April 1997; Regional District of Central Okanagan (RDCO), *Overview Report: Growth Management Strategy*, April 1997; Regional District of Central Okanagan (RDCO), *RDCO Terms of Reference For The Growth Management Strategy*, no date.

Intergovernmental Advisory Committee.¹⁹² The Intergovernmental Advisory Committee (IAC) includes the planning directors of the regional district and all the participating municipalities, and senior provincial government officials appointed by the Minister of Municipal Affairs.¹⁹³ The purpose of the IAC is to inform and support the RGS development process and ensure that provincial objectives are addressed.¹⁹⁴

The initial plan for developing the RGS outlined in the terms of reference and work program was comprehensive and promising. Phase one was to include data collection and the development of reports through both staff research and work by consultants on the following:

- growth management issues in the Central Okanagan;
- growth management approaches in other jurisdictions;
- population, demographics and housing preferences;
- population and economics;
- regional infrastructure and servicing – current capacities and future challenges;
- development patterns and trends;
- environment and open space – current conditions and future challenges.¹⁹⁵

The RDCO long-range planner overseeing the development of the RGS said one of the key goals of these studies was to “to get a handle on where growth can be accommodated.”¹⁹⁶

Phase two, which by July 1997 was expected to extend into 1998, was to be the analysis stage in which two studies were to be completed.¹⁹⁷ The first study, a cost of growth study, was to examine the full range of costs associated with development, such as municipal servicing and infrastructure costs and environmental costs.¹⁹⁸ This study was intended to highlight the fact that poor planning costs everyone.¹⁹⁹ A second study was to assess the constraints and capacities associated with development in the Central Okanagan including environmental, resources and servicing capacity constraints that could affect the extent, nature and location of growth in the Central Okanagan. Specific capacities and constraints that were to be analyzed included, water, transportation, liquid waste management and the location of hazard areas and environmentally sensitive areas.²⁰⁰ The intent of the constraint and capacity assessment was to recognize that there is a carrying capacity in the Okanagan and that in order to have safe and healthy

¹⁹² Ministry of Municipal Affairs, “Around the Regions,” *Taking Action: Growth Strategies in B.C.*, March 1997, <http://www.marh.gov.bc.ca/GROWTH/MAR1997/region.html>.

¹⁹³ Ministry of Municipal Affairs, *An Explanatory Guide* [note 2];

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁵ RDCO, *Growth Management Strategy Work* [note 28];

¹⁹⁶ Ministry of Municipal Affairs, “Spotlight: Regional District of Central Okanagan,” *Taking Action: Growth Strategies in B.C.*, July 1997, <http://www.marh.gov.bc.ca/GROWTH/JULY1997/cord.html>.

¹⁹⁷ Ministry of Municipal Affairs, “Spotlight” [note 33]; RDCO, *RDCO Terms of* [note 28].

¹⁹⁸ RDCO, *RDCO Terms of* [note 28].

¹⁹⁹ Ministry of Municipal Affairs, “Spotlight” [note 33].

²⁰⁰ RDCO, *RDCO Terms of* [note 28].

communities, limits to growth must be recognized.²⁰¹ At the end of Phase two, the information and analyses were to be integrated to develop growth management options in the form of working scenarios for analysis in order to develop the final RGS, which would be adopted by the regional district in the form of a bylaw.

These early stages of RDCO RGS process led an official with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs to suggest that the RDCO RGS, if it continued in the direction it is currently headed, might become the “best, most comprehensive growth strategy in BC.”²⁰² However, the regional district soon began to reconsider its enthusiasm. According to an April 1998 update report, a workshop on the RGS process including all locally elected officials, administrators, planning directors and members of the Intergovernmental Advisory Committee was held in December 1997.²⁰³ At this workshop, the work programme and approach to the completion of the RGS were “simplified and re-focused”²⁰⁴ to “reduce the scope and complexity of the planning process.”²⁰⁵ It was also decided that the elected officials and staff should work together to develop a regional vision statement to guide the completion of the RGS.²⁰⁶ It is unclear exactly why the work programme and approach were “simplified and re-focused.” Limited funding and staff resources may have played a role. Lack of political will to develop a comprehensive growth strategy that might recommend major changes in the Central Okanagan could have also been a factor.

Under the simplified and re-focused work program, a visioning session was held in March 1998 with local elected officials and RDCO staff to develop a regional vision statement and associated guiding principles.²⁰⁷ Public input on the regional vision statement and guiding principles was sought through a *2020 Vision* newsletter distributed in July 1998.²⁰⁸ The newsletter noted that the next steps in the RGS process during 1998 would be the development of

- a regional "green-zone",
- an agreed-to set of planning principles,
- an inventory of resource lands and employment areas,
- an inventory of water supply resources and servicing infrastructure, and
- a revised look at the population and employment projectors for the region.²⁰⁹

²⁰¹ Ministry of Municipal Affairs, Spotlight” [note 33].

²⁰² Project Interviewee 6, Ministry of Municipal Affairs, [note 8].

²⁰³ Ministry of Municipal Affairs, “Around the Regions,” *Taking Action: Growth Strategies in B.C.*, May 1998, <http://www.marh.gov.bc.ca/GROWTH/MAY1998/regions.html>.

²⁰⁴ Ministry of Municipal Affairs, “Around the” [note 40]; Regional District of Central Okanagan (RDCO), *Growth Management Strategy Update: Central Okanagan Growth Management Strategy*, April 9, 1998, p. 1.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁸ Regional District of Central Okanagan (RDCO), *2020 Vision*, no date.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

The newsletter further indicated that the major task for 1998 would be the development of a *Growth Management Strategy Framework* “that contains planning principles, objectives, strategies, and planning initiatives.”²¹⁰ According to the April 1998 update report, the framework would require the agreement of the regional district and the participating municipalities and electoral areas “on the regional vision, the map products, the regional priorities, objectives and policies. But it would not require a detailed analysis of development options or growth scenarios,” as was planned in the original work programme.²¹¹ The update report further indicated,

Once strategic directions are established and agreed to, it will be up to the municipalities and electoral areas to determine the level of detail required to meet the established policies and objectives.²¹²

The update report stated that key elements of the framework document were to be

- a common vision for the Central Okanagan
- a regional map indicating the developable and non-developable areas
- a set of regional planning principles, goals, objectives, indicators and policy statements – developed for transportation, water, economic development, governance, regional services, environmental protection and housing.²¹³

In February 1999, a draft of the *Growth Management Strategy Framework* was completed.²¹⁴ The first section included

- a 2020 Vision Statement for the Central Okanagan;
- a Regional Statement on Growth Management;
- 10 Major Growth Management Objectives; and
- General Growth Management Policies.²¹⁵

The second section of the framework document included an action plan with sections on the key “issue areas” agreed to by the participating local governments in December 1998.²¹⁶ The key issue areas are regional governance and service delivery, strategic priority housing, environmental protection, water resources, air quality, economic development, and transportation. The section for each key issue area in the framework document outlined the growth issues associated with the issue area, a list of the guiding principles for the issue area that

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

²¹¹ RDCO, *Growth Management Strategy Update* [note 41], p. 3.

²¹² *Ibid.*, p. 3.

²¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

²¹⁴ RDCO, *Growth Management Strategy Framework* [note 3].

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*

²¹⁶ Regional District of Central Okanagan (RDCO), *The Growth Management Strategy for the Regional District of Central Okanagan*, Department of Regional and Community Planning, June 1999.

were developed at the March 1998 workshop, a list of initiatives currently underway with regard to the issue area, and strategies/actions to address the issue area.²¹⁷ Appendix 1 included a list of potential measures, targets and indicators of success for each issue area and Appendix 2 included a list of the steps that need to be undertaken in implementing the RGS.²¹⁸ The February version of the framework document was only a draft and some sections appeared to be incomplete. Maps of developable and non-developable areas were not included with the framework document.²¹⁹

In June 1999, RDCO circulated a draft document entitled *The Growth Management Strategy for the Regional District of Central Okanagan*.²²⁰ This document was in the form of a draft bylaw and essentially incorporated section one of the framework document with some minor revisions, including the “2020 Vision Statement,” “Regional Statement on Growth Management,” “10 Major Growth Objectives,” and “General Growth Management Policies”. Introductory sections of the bylaw outlined the purpose of the *Growth Management Strategy*, the process by which it was developed and the phases in which it will be completed.²²¹ RDCO asked various stakeholders in the region to review the proposed bylaw in July 1999.²²² A Joint Council Meeting of all of the elected officials in the regional district was held in August 1999 to provide input on the proposed bylaw.²²³ The public was also invited to this Joint Council Meeting, but very few attended.²²⁴ The principles of the bylaw received the general support of the Joint Council and subsequent meetings with each council individually resulted in only minor changes to the bylaw.²²⁵ The bylaw was presented to the Regional Board in September 1999 for first reading.²²⁶ The formal bylaw approval process was expected to take a few months. As of May 2000, the bylaw had not yet been approved and work was still underway on the draft bylaw.

The bylaw is not intended to be the end of the RGS. As of September 1999, the plan was to develop issue papers for each of the key issue areas including, regional governance and service delivery, strategic priority housing, environmental protection, water resources, air quality, economic development, and transportation.²²⁷ As part of the implementation of the RGS, participating local governments are supposed to reach agreement on guiding principles for each of the key issue areas.²²⁸ RDCO plans to implement the RGS through a series of implementation

²¹⁷ RDCO, *Growth Management Strategy Framework* [note 3].

²¹⁸ *Ibid.*

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²²⁰ RDCO, *The Growth Management Strategy* [note 53].

²²¹ *Ibid.*

²²² Project Interviewee 10, Regional District of Central Okanagan, August 1999.

²²³ *Ibid.*

²²⁴ *Ibid.*

²²⁵ *Ibid.*

²²⁶ Ministry of Municipal Affairs, *The Regions*, January 2000, <http://www.marh.gov.bc.ca/GROWTH/ovalley/>.

²²⁷ Rob Munro, “Growth plan ready for open discussions,” *The Kelowna Daily Courier*, June 8, 1999, p. A2; Project Interviewee 10, Regional District of Central Okanagan, [note 59].

²²⁸ RDCO, *The Growth Management Strategy* [note 53].

agreements for each of the key issue areas with the participating municipalities and other levels of government. The implementation agreements will spell out in more detail how the RGS will be implemented and will set out “initiatives, roles and responsibilities, funding commitments, and time lines.”²²⁹ It is unknown whether a schedule has been set for the development of the implementation agreements.

Many of the originally planned studies have not yet been undertaken. To date, only the assessment of growth management issues in the Central Okanagan, analysis of growth management approaches in other jurisdictions, population and economic projections and aggregate (sand and gravel) resources study have been completed.²³⁰ The other tasks outlined in the April 1998 update report and July 1998 2020 Vision newsletter, including developing a regional green-zone, an inventory of resource lands and employment areas, an inventory of water supply resources and servicing infrastructure and an agreed-to-set of planning principles, are in various stages of completion. Completing a water servicing assessment is proposed as a strategy in the framework document, and work is underway on determining the regional role in managing water resources and watersheds.²³¹ Work is also underway on a sensitive ecosystem inventory, which is part of the regional green-zone development.²³² The status of the inventory of resource lands and employment areas and the agreed-to set of planning principles is unknown.

Effectiveness

At the outset, the RGS was intended to incorporate many principles of sustainability. The RGS terms of reference explicitly stated that the RGS must recognize that there are limits to growth and that the ecosystems of the Central Okanagan have a finite carrying capacity:

By definition, a growth management strategy recognizes that there are limits to growth, because there are limits to the carrying capacity of the land and resources.... The Strategy will attempt to produce a planning framework that will balance the land use demands with the carrying capacity of the environment and the affected community.²³³

The initial objectives of the RGS likewise incorporated many principles of sustainability, aiming

²²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

²³⁰ Ministry of Municipal Affairs, *The Regions* [note 63]; RDCO, *2020 Vision* [note 45]; Regional District of Central Okanagan (RDCO), *Growth Management Approaches: Lessons from Other Places*, Phase One Background Report #1, February, 1997; Regional District of Central Okanagan (RDCO), *Shaping Growth in the Central Okanagan: Growth Management Issues*, Phase One Background Report #2, February 1997; Urban Systems, *Regional District of Central Okanagan, Population and Employment Projections – 2018: Final Report*, July 1999.

²³¹ Ministry of Municipal Affairs, *The Regions* [note 63]; RDCO, *Growth Management Strategy Framework* [note 3].

²³² Project Interviewee 10, Regional District of Central Okanagan, [note 59].

²³³ RDCO, *RDCO Terms of* [note 28].

- to assess the cumulative impacts of planning and development decisions across the region,
- to identify the social, environmental and economic impacts associated with growth in the region,
- to determine the most sustainable form of development, based on analysis of environmental carrying capacity, as well as municipal, financial, and quality of life constraints.²³⁴

The broad principles of the RGS process agreed to by all of the participating local governments also looked promising. They gave equal attention to the ecological, economic and social aspects of sustainability and included a commitment to

support the broad goal of the Growth Management Strategy, which is to promote human settlement that is socially, economically, and environmentally healthy and that makes efficient use of public facilities and services, land and other resources.²³⁵

Similarly, the studies originally planned in conjunction with the RGS offered a comprehensive approach to evaluating the issues associated with growth and its implications for sustainability. The land uses inventory and development patterns report was to include an inventory of land uses in the region and a review of growth trends and development patterns, such as urban and suburban form characteristics, land conversion rates and development standards and their impact on urban form.²³⁶ The environment and open space report was to include an inventory of the physical characteristics of the region including topography, vegetation, water, natural features and hazardous areas.²³⁷ An assessment of areas to be protected was to be included.

The RGS terms of reference also recognized the importance of a holistic, ecosystem approach to planning, noting that ultimately a “greenlands strategy” taking an ecosystem approach to planning for green space would be required.²³⁸ It was noted that this should be done on a watershed basis and therefore could not be done adequately in the RGS, because the Central Okanagan covers only part of the relevant watershed.²³⁹ It stated, however, that issues and potential protection areas should be identified through the RGS to feed into a larger ecosystem based planning process at some point in time.²⁴⁰ The proposed cost of growth study and constraint and capacity assessment also reflected principles of sustainability by emphasizing that there are economic, ecological and social costs to growth, and that the region has a finite

²³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

²³⁵ RDCO, *Overview Report* [note 28], p. 5.

²³⁶ RDCO, *RDCO Terms of* [note 28].

²³⁷ *Ibid.*

²³⁸ *Ibid.*

²³⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

capacity to produce the resources required for growth and absorb the wastes produced as a result of growth.²⁴¹

Unfortunately, while the intent of the proposed RGS process was consistent with many principles of sustainability, and offered the possibility that the Central Okanagan RGS would be very effective at incorporating principles of sustainability, the initial final products do not appear to have lived up to the original intent.

Some components of the draft RGS bylaw do reflect principles of sustainability. For example, the "2020 Vision Statement", which is intended to describe how the Central Okanagan should appear in the year 2020, advocates protecting natural capital, integrating social, ecological and economic concerns and taking an ecosystem approach:

The Central Okanagan:

- is a region that protects and respects its natural attributes. The region's green spaces and water resources are managed to ensure their long-term health and sustainability...
- is a region that promotes economic competitive advantage in its natural assets and the unique skills of its workforce. Investment decisions reflect a commitment to both economic and environmental sustainability...
- is part of a larger region and ecosystem. Our development and growth management decisions respect our neighboring Okanagan communities. Valley-wide cooperation is supported to sustain the health of our water, air and lands.²⁴²

The remaining components of the vision statement also stress the importance of promoting healthy, inclusive communities and supporting arts, culture, tourism and recreation.²⁴³ The "Regional Statement on Growth Management" states what the local governments within the Central Okanagan are committed to doing in order to achieve the 2020 Vision. It includes seven points that reflect various principles of sustainability, in this case recognizing that the "environment is fragile" and "natural resources are limited" and ensuring that "growth management decisions will respect the carrying capacity of our water, air and land."²⁴⁴ The regional statement on growth management also contains a commitment to respecting the rights of their children to a "healthy, safe and sustainable community" and suggests the beginnings of an ecosystem approach by emphasizing that the Central Okanagan is a "region within a region" in terms of environmental stewardship.²⁴⁵

Although the RGS does promote some principles of sustainability, it seems to contain an underlying tension between the ecological aspects of sustainability and the economic and social aspects of sustainability. Many of the points in the regional statement focus on non-ecological issues, such as a commitment to enhance the quality of life in the Central Okanagan, to spend tax

²⁴¹ *Ibid.*

²⁴² RDCO, *The Growth Management Strategy* [note 53], p. 6.

²⁴³ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

²⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

dollars wisely and to treat economic development as a shared responsibility.²⁴⁶ Concerning the rights of the children of the regional district to have a sustainable community, the statement says this will require “preventing environmental harm to the greatest extent possible, and promoting long term economic development that is capable of sustaining our next generation.”²⁴⁷

While the non-ecological goals of the regional statement are very important aspects of sustainability, the way some of the goals are phrased seems to suggest a hierarchy of preferences – with preventing harm to the environment to the greatest extent possible being important, but economic development being crucial to future well being. This may be because the ecological aspects of sustainability are still viewed as an add-on in the regional district – to be considered when possible, but to remain secondary to the economic aspects of sustainability. A project interviewee described the approach to land use decision making in the regional district as follows:

I think a lot of the decisions that have gone on here have been just in terms of economic viability and I don’t think they have ever balanced out what the environmental and social costs of that are and I think it is just now with the very rapid growth that they are starting to see that maybe they have to expand their decision making process to include a few other things.²⁴⁸

The RGS seems to recognize that ecological sustainability is important, but does not seem to be placing it on equal footing with economic and social sustainability. Committing to preventing environmental harm to the “greatest extent possible” leaves the door open to justifying ecological damage because prevention was not possible without compromising economic development priorities.

The RGS also seems to contain a commitment to continued development and does not appear to contemplate that in some cases development simply should not occur at all for ecological reasons. For example, the bylaw contains statements such as “coordinate future growth with the provision of adequate and affordable infrastructure” or “promote development that sustains and enhances the environment.”²⁴⁹ There is a statement regarding limiting sprawl, which is positive for sustainability, even though the statement itself focuses on the financial reasons for doing so rather than the ecological reasons: “ensure the financial well being of our municipalities and region through limitations on sprawl and the efficient use of land, resources, energy and infrastructure.”²⁵⁰ Likewise, the growth management policies do reflect a commitment to trying to contain growth in Town Centres and areas that are already fully serviced and ensuring that services are available in new development areas before development is permitted to occur.²⁵¹ However, considering the ecological impacts of new developments does not appear to be a major

²⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

²⁴⁸ Project Interviewee 11, Environmental Group, August, 1996.

²⁴⁹ RDCO, *The Growth Management Strategy* [note 53], p. 8.

²⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

²⁵¹ *Ibid.*

concern. For example, proposals for “new growth areas, major OCP Amendments and major infrastructure projects” need only assess the following,

- the impact on existing services and facilities, and the ability of local governments and agencies to provide services in a timely, affordable, and effective manner;
- the short and long-term fiscal impact of the development on the community.²⁵²

Consideration of ecological issues in association with new developments is mentioned in Policy 5, which requires

an environmental review of *developments deemed to impact* the ability of the land, watershed, and other natural resources to accommodate the proposed development.²⁵³
[emphasis in the original]

While it is positive that environmental reviews will be considered, this policy seems to provide for significant latitude in determining what developments are deemed to threaten the ecology of the area and could result in few environmental reviews actually being conducted.

An overarching problem with the RDCO RGS in its current form is that it simply does not contain much detail. The RGS bylaw is only ten pages long and contains only three pages outlining any actions that the local governments in the regional district will undertake.²⁵⁴ Moreover, most of the actions proposed are vaguely outlined.²⁵⁵ Local newspapers noted that the proposed bylaw is long on motherhood statements and short on any detail with regard to how the vision, objectives and policies outlined in the RGS bylaw are going to be achieved.²⁵⁶ As noted, many of the originally planned studies and analyses, intended to highlight the costs of growth and determine how much growth can be accommodated and where it can be accommodated, have not been done to date.

Perhaps in part because it did not have the information from these studies, the RGS does not contain specific targets on how much of what types of growth will be permitted or details on where growth will be permitted. For example, it establishes a policy that residential developments should include a range of housing types and densities without specifying what is meant by a range of types and densities. Thus this policy could be interpreted in many ways. An environmentalist interviewed for the project pointed out the difficulties associated with motherhood statements:

The importance is that it not get so lost in the motherhood statement that it doesn't affect the decision-making, because I have seen [motherhood statements] used in councils, or

²⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 9.

²⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

²⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁶ Munro, “Growth plan” [note 64].

by councils before when they are debating an issue and all of them agreed to the principle, but how it actually translates into the decision making is incredible because you can have very diametrically opposed views [on what the principle actually means].²⁵⁷

The participating municipal governments and electoral areas also have to prepare Regional Context Statements that describe how their OCP reflects and implements the RGS within two years of the RGS bylaw adoption.²⁵⁸ The components of the proposed RGS bylaw are at the moment sufficiently vague that municipalities or electoral areas that are unenthusiastic about promoting sustainability could claim to have incorporated the RGS components into their OCP without making any significant changes to business as usual.

In terms of promoting ecological sustainability and incorporating sufficient detail, the draft RDCO RGS can be compared to the Greater Vancouver Regional District *Livable Region Strategic Plan* and the Regional District of Nanaimo *Growth Management Plan*. The Livable Region Strategic Plan is based on four key principles, protecting the green zone, building complete communities, achieving a compact metropolitan region and increasing transportation choice.²⁵⁹ It includes a number of policies designed to ensure that a green zone is developed and protected, including a map of potential parks and green zone areas.²⁶⁰ It also contains specific targets for various housing types promoting a move to higher density housing in areas that it has identified as growth concentration areas.²⁶¹ While the policies associated with *the Livable Region Strategic Plan* are also somewhat vague and could promote ecological, economic and social sustainability more forcefully, they are clearer and stronger than those contained in the RDCO RGS.

The Regional District of Nanaimo *Growth Management Plan* sets an even higher standard. The Regional District of Nanaimo's plan is a detailed 90-page document that sets out clear environmental protection policies, contains schedules for implementation of specific strategies and clearly identifies growth centres and an urban boundary.²⁶² Its policies are clear and strong, stating, for example, "additional urban development will not be approved outside of Urban Boundaries, other than in Village Centres and Present Status Lands"²⁶³ and "a system of interconnected trails, greenways, and natural corridors capable of sustaining or enhancing native plants and animal species will be established regionally."²⁶⁴ At this stage, the RDCO RGS falls

²⁵⁷ Project Interviewee 11, Environmental Group [note 85].

²⁵⁸ Ministry of Municipal Affairs, *An Explanatory Guide* [note 2]; RDCO, *The Growth Management Strategy* [note 53].

²⁵⁹ Greater Vancouver Regional District (GVRD), *Livable Region Strategic Plan* (Vancouver: Greater Vancouver Regional District, Strategic Planning, April 1996).

²⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁶¹ *Ibid.*

²⁶² Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN), *Growth Management Plan for the Regional District of Nanaimo* (Nanaimo: Regional District of Nanaimo, Development Services, January 1997).

²⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 24.

²⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 47.

short of the level of commitment to promoting ecological, economic and social sustainability encompassed in the Regional District of Nanaimo *Growth Management Plan*.

A final problem associated with the potential effectiveness of the RDCO RGS in promoting sustainability lies in its implementation arrangements. Relying on OCPs as a key delivery vehicle for the RGS could be problematic because municipalities frequently do not adhere to or implement all aspects of their own OCPs. The City of Kelowna, for example, has recently ignored its own OCP and decided that a 2700 home development proposal in the environmentally sensitive Glenmore Highlands will go to public hearing, even though the City's OCP indicated that only 700 homes would be permitted in the Glenmore area.²⁶⁵

Overall, the draft RGS bylaw does not at the moment effectively incorporate principles of ecological, economic and social sustainability, particularly principles of ecological sustainability. The goals of sustainability that are included in the bylaw are important and are a step in the right direction. They will likely encourage attention to some sustainability considerations into future planning decisions. However, by themselves, they are too vague and provide too much latitude to ensure the incorporation of sustainability considerations into planning decisions. Likewise, while the bylaw does emphasize many aspects of social and economic sustainability, it does not seem to recognize that achieving ecological sustainability is integral to achieving social and economic sustainability.

If there are grounds for hope, they lie in the RDCO draft *Growth Management Strategy Framework*, which is somewhat more detailed than the draft bylaw and includes many items that encourage ecological sustainability that were not included in the draft bylaw. For example, in the draft framework document, the policy regarding new growth areas, major OCP Amendments and major infrastructure projects, described above, included a requirement to assess "the ability of the land, watershed, and other natural resources to accommodate the proposed development."²⁶⁶ This requirement was removed when section one of the framework was turned into the proposed bylaw. Section two of the framework document, which was also not included in the bylaw, contains proposed guiding principles, strategies and actions for each of the key issue areas that are consistent with principles of sustainability, provide more detail on what is to be done, and place greater emphasis on the ecological aspect of sustainability. For example, concerning environmental protection, which is a key issue area, the framework document states,

Instead of preserving land for future residential development, the natural features and significant open spaces should be defined first in order to develop a boundary to urban development.²⁶⁷

²⁶⁵ Rob Munro, "Hobson lone voice against Glenmore development," *The Kelowna Daily Courier*, June 1, 1999, p. A3.

²⁶⁶ RDCO, *Growth Management Strategy Framework* [note 3], p. 9.

²⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

Similarly, the framework document advocates that guiding principles for environmental protection should include, “ensur[ing] that urban, rural, and resource development do not harm the landscapes, wildlife, and waterways of the region,” and “protect[ing] the viewsapes, heritage resources and sensitive natural environments.”²⁶⁸ It also suggests various strategies/actions – including creation of a region wide greenspace system and regulations and guidelines for managing sensitive and hazardous environmental areas – to ensure that these principles are met.²⁶⁹ The framework outlines similar principles and strategies/actions for the other key issue areas. While the framework does not provide detailed targets or action plans, it does provide more detail than the RGS with regard to what actions will be undertaken.

Unfortunately, while the RGS framework document contains more detail and reflects a greater commitment to sustainability, it is a draft that has not been approved and the principles and strategies/actions it contains were not incorporated into the draft bylaw by the decision makers due to the difficulties associated with reaching agreement on them.²⁷⁰ According to a planner in the region, the bylaw reflects the “level of detail that people are prepared to agree to now.”²⁷¹ As of September 1999, RDCO hoped to incorporate the principles and strategies/actions in the framework document into implementation agreements between the regional district and its member municipalities and electoral areas that will be developed over the next several years.²⁷² Nevertheless, the RDCO RGS bylaw has not yet been approved and efforts are still ongoing to complete it. It is possible that the final product may incorporate more detail and reflect a greater commitment to sustainability than the draft bylaw produced in 1999.

There are many potential reasons for the shortcomings of the draft RDCO RGS in terms of effectively promoting sustainability. In part it simply reflects one of the weaknesses in the whole RGS process as set out in the *Growth Strategies Act*. Because the participating municipalities and electoral areas must agree to the measures contained within an RGS, there is significant potential for the measures to be watered down by one or more municipalities or electoral areas that are less sustainability oriented than the others. This may have occurred in the case of RDCO. Municipalities have a significant amount of independence in BC and the regional and provincial governments have very limited power over them. An environmentalist interviewed for the project pointed out the difficulties that regional districts face in trying to affect change:

I think [the regional district’s] only ability to influence decision-making is to reach consensus with the municipalities because... regional districts don’t have a lot of power and I don’t think there is anything regional districts could get away with if the

²⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p 18.

²⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

²⁷⁰ Project Interviewee 10, Regional District of Central Okanagan [note 59]; RDCO, *The Growth Management Strategy* [note 53].

²⁷¹ Munro, “Growth plan” [note 64], p. A2.

²⁷² Project Interviewee 10, Regional District of Central Okanagan [note 59].

municipalities weren't on board The province holds most of the power and what they don't hold the municipalities do and the regions really don't.²⁷³

Another possible reason for the differences between the RDCO RGS and the plans produced by the Greater Vancouver Regional District and the Regional District of Nanaimo lies in the fact that the ecological, social and economic problems associated with improper growth are not as obvious in the Central Okanagan as they are in Greater Vancouver and Nanaimo. There is a lot of undeveloped land remaining in the Central Okanagan. Traffic congestion, while bad at certain times of the day and year along the main highway through Kelowna and along the bridge from Westbank to Kelowna, is not like the problems faced in Greater Vancouver. Air quality, while occasionally poor, is not as problematic as the air quality in Greater Vancouver. Some of the major growth problems in the Central Okanagan, such as the potential extirpation and extinction of species, such as the rattlesnakes, bats and invertebrates, which are often not perceived as appealing, are less visible to the public and are not often the type of issue that leads to public outcry for change.

Moreover, it has been suggested that the people of the Okanagan are not as supportive of ecological protection as people in other regions are. A project interviewee noted,

Kelowna is sort of unique in the province because we have is a really nice beautiful area and we have people that come from the city, that have no respect for the environment anyway, or very little respect and then they come to this area and they fit right in, because they continue to trash it just like the city... A good example in development would be the loss of wetlands. I mean the Okanagan had substantial wetlands. All of this area in fact used to be all wetlands, close to the lake. Well it's all gone, almost all gone.²⁷⁴

Another person interviewed for the project observed,

Decisions that are made in this valley are so geared to economic development... environment really seems to be a fringe..... Something that is nice to have is great, but something that really doesn't matter much and hey we've got lots of it so who cares. I think environment is assumed to be an aesthetic issue and as long as it looks okay it is okay...²⁷⁵

When responding to surveys or engaging in OCP discussions, many citizens in municipalities such as Kelowna indicate that they want less growth and more environmental protection, but they don't appear willing to change their own lifestyles.²⁷⁶ For example, as noted above, in a recent OCP survey, 78 percent of respondents advocated reduced reliance on automobiles but 63

²⁷³ Project Interviewee 11, Environmental Group [note 85].

²⁷⁴ Project Interviewee 7, Environmental Group, August, 1996.

²⁷⁵ Project Interviewee 11, Environmental Group [note 85].

²⁷⁶ City of Kelowna, *Kelowna's Official Community Plan: Schedule A By-law 7600* (Kelowna: City of Kelowna, 1995); City of Kelowna, *Official Community Plan March 1999 Survey: Results Summary*, June 30, 1999.

percent indicated that they would not consider getting to work in any way other than their personal automobile. Munro observed with regard to the people of Kelowna “what they want for the city contradicts what they’re willing to do to achieve it.”²⁷⁷

Thus, in creating the RGS in its current form, political representatives and staff on the Growth Management Steering Committee may simply have been responding to broad public opinion and unwillingness to change. The attitudes of the politicians themselves may also have played a role in shaping the RGS in its current form. Many current politicians are more in favour of sustainability than past politicians, but are still moving slowly. One project interviewee noted that for the regional district to even start seriously considering the implications of growth is great leap forward, considering how far behind the region was in terms of promoting sustainability, due in part to past politicians.

The overall effectiveness of the RGS is yet to be determined because the final product has yet to be developed. At least part of the effectiveness of the RGS process will likely rest on the implementation agreements still under development. If the implementation agreements reflect some of the content of the framework document, they might prove to be a valuable step towards ecological, economic and social sustainability. However, the participating municipal governments and electoral areas will have to come to agreement on what should be in the implementation agreements. Judging from what these parties were able to reach agreement on for the draft RGS bylaw, negotiating meaningful implementation agreements that have sufficient detail and go far enough to result in real change will be a challenge.

Nevertheless, the RDCO RGS process is a process. It is not yet complete and even if the final products are not what one might hope for in terms of promoting sustainability, it has started a discourse about growth in the region among politicians, planners and the public. That discourse is important. Thus, even though it may be less than effective in promoting sustainability, the draft RGS should be considered a step forward.

Efficiency

The RGS process was intended to enjoy many efficiencies, including

- building on existing resources by incorporating information, resources and expertise that have been developed through planning exercises conducted prior to the RGS;
- building on the growth management experiences of other jurisdictions in BC and elsewhere in North America; and
- building on short-term successes by incorporating short-term objectives that can be met during the planning process to allow for the early evaluation of the effectiveness of components of the strategy and hold the interest of the participants.²⁷⁸

²⁷⁷ Rob Munro, “The problem with planning,” *The Kelowna Daily Courier*, June 3, 1999, p. A3.

²⁷⁸ RDCO, *RDCO Terms of* [note 28].

The RGS terms of reference expected considerable data collection, documentation and mapping would be done in the RGS process.²⁷⁹ It stressed that this work be done in standard ways consistent with those utilized in other jurisdictions to allow for future data sharing.²⁸⁰ It also noted that many planning processes, such as the *Okanagan-Shuswap Land and Resource Management Plan* and *Okanagan Valley Transportation Plan* were being developed at the same time as the RGS and were also generating significant amounts of information that should be incorporated into the RGS to prevent duplication of data gathering.²⁸¹ Similarly, the communications plan of the RGS stated that the public consultation process of the RGS was intended to use existing focus groups for public input into the RGS in order to be efficient and avoid the need to establish a whole new public consultation process.²⁸² However, despite realizing some of these efficiencies, the RDCO RGS process was also inefficient in many ways.

On the positive side, the RDCO RGS was developed on a fairly low annual budget with limited staff resources. The 1999 budget for the RGS process was about \$330,000 and not all of the budget was expended.²⁸³ Moreover, expense was avoided by "simplifying and refocusing" the approach to the RGS in 1997 and choosing not to complete many of the originally proposed studies and analyses including the cost of growth and constraint and capacity assessment. However, simplifying and refocusing the approach to some extent wasted the considerable work was undertaken by RDCO staff in the first two years of the RGS to design a process that incorporated the appropriate studies and analyses. Likewise, in the absence of the studies the RGS may not have been developed on the basis of a full cost accounting of the ecological, social and economic costs and benefits of various options. In addition, given that environmental assessments are only required of "developments *deemed to impact* the ability of the land, watershed, and other natural resources to accommodate the proposed development,"²⁸⁴ the RGS does not promote a full cost accounting approach to future activities in the regional district.

RDCO did analyze approaches to growth management in other jurisdictions to build on their experiences,²⁸⁵ but it does not appear that many of these approaches actually made it into the RDCO RGS. Likewise, RDCO did provide data to and receive data from the Okanagan Valley Transportation Plan process and the Land and Resource Management Planning process. But because RDCO did not develop as much data as it had planned, and did not appear utilize much of these available data in developing the RGS bylaw, it is not clear if significant efficiency was actually captured in this regard.²⁸⁶

²⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁸¹ *Ibid.*

²⁸² Regional District of Central Okanagan (RDCO), *Communications Plan for the Regional District of Central Okanagan Growth Management Strategy*, no date.

²⁸³ Project Interviewee 10, Regional District of Central Okanagan [note 59].

²⁸⁴ RDCO, *The Growth Management Strategy* [note 53], p. 9.

²⁸⁵ RDCO, *Growth Management Approaches* [note 67].

²⁸⁶ Ministry of Municipal Affairs, "Around the Regions," *Taking Action: Growth Strategies in B.C.*, September 1998, <http://www.marh.gov.bc.ca/GROWTH/SEPT1998/region.html>.

The RGS process did consider the experiences and results of the OCPs that had recently been conducted in the municipalities and electoral areas and tried to incorporate the public input into those processes into the RGS instead of conducting its own public consultation.²⁸⁷ Again money was saved by avoidance of additional public consultation and the results of these other public consultations may have provided a reasonably good assessment of public sentiment. However, it may prove to be inefficient in the long run if unconsulted members of the public do not buy into the final product and demand that components of the RGS be changed to reflect their views. In contrast, provincial government agencies were consulted through the IAC regarding the content of the RGS, and thus may be more consistently supportive and less inclined to challenge implementation initiatives.

Some positive efficiency results may also arise from the RGS framework document's identification of existing initiatives, and its stress on the importance of building on existing initiatives in developing the strategies and actions.²⁸⁸ This depends, however, on the extent to which the strategies and actions identified in the framework are incorporated into the implementation agreements. The RDCO RGS may also achieve efficiencies by building on short-term objectives that can be realized and evaluated in the planning process. Too many plans focus on long-term objectives that are never implemented and become quickly outdated as circumstances change. By focusing ensuring that short-term objectives are included and that evaluations of the effectiveness of various objectives are undertaken as the strategy is implemented, RDCO could change objectives that are not suitable thus creating an efficient, adaptive plan.

Despite the many efficiencies realized by the RGS, one of the major inefficiencies revolves around the long-term adequacy of the RGS. A strong and well-supported RGS developed with appropriate data and analysis might be expected to serve well for many years. This may be unlikely given the range of inadequacies associated with the proposed RGS bylaw (see previous section). However, given that the bulk of the RGS remains to come in the form of a new bylaw, implementation agreements, it might be too soon to predict the strategy's shelf life.

Equity

The draft RGS was developed through the work of the Growth Management Steering Committee, which consisted of staff and political representatives from RDCO, the City of Kelowna, the District of Peachland, the District of Lake Country and the Westbank First Nation.²⁸⁹ It also included political representatives of the regional district electoral areas within the RDCO boundaries.²⁹⁰ The Growth Management Steering Committee also consulted with the provincial agencies that were part of the Interagency Advisory Committee (IAC), including the

²⁸⁷ Project Interviewee 10, Regional District of Central Okanagan [note 59].

²⁸⁸ RDCO, *Growth Management Strategy Framework* [note 3].

²⁸⁹ RDCO, *2020 Vision* [note 45].

²⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

Ministry of Forests, Ministry of Transportation and Highways, Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks, Ministry of Energy and Mines, the BC Transportation Finance Authority and the Agricultural Land Commission.²⁹¹ The Irrigation Districts, School District, Health Region of Okanagan-Similkameen were also consulted by the Steering Committee.²⁹²

In contrast, the public has not been consulted significantly in the RGS process. The original communications plan for the RGS process outlined public consultation procedures that included consultation with existing focus groups, community newsletters that would seek public opinion, community updates and presentations, a community survey and finally a public hearing after the second reading of the bylaw.²⁹³ However, when the approach to the RGS was simplified and re-focused, many of the public consultation plans were eliminated. Instead the RGS process relied primarily on the results of public consultations held in association with the development of the OCPs in the region.²⁹⁴ These results had some timeliness since several of the OCPs had been updated in the last five years, but regional growth management was not the specific focus of the OCP consultations, although it was addressed. In addition, two RGS newsletters were sent out to households in the regional district – the first in September of 1996 and the second in July of 1998.²⁹⁵ Although both newsletters encouraged the public to contact the regional district and provide comments with regard to growth management, the response to these surveys was limited.²⁹⁶ Public hearings for the proposed RGS bylaw were held in Kelowna in June and October 1999.²⁹⁷ Although the level of public consultation carried out is likely insufficient to meet standards of procedural equity, it is important to remember that local governments are operating with increasingly limited budgets from the provincial government and extensive public consultation may have seemed to be an unnecessary expense, when consultations had been recently conducted in association with OCPs.

Equity among the participants on the Growth Management Steering Committee is also a concern. The “Regional Statement on Growth Management” specifically notes the importance of the local governments working together and stresses that “all local governments must have a meaningful role in regional decision making.”²⁹⁸ However, Kelowna, because of its disproportionate size compared to the other municipalities and electoral areas in the Regional District, controls 71 percent of the votes on the Regional District board and pays 71 percent of the budget for joint functions.²⁹⁹ While the board generally works cooperatively, the smaller municipalities of Peachland and Lake Country have expressed concerns regarding the influence that Kelowna has on the board, particularly with regard to the RGS process, and have suggested

²⁹¹ RDCO, *The Growth Management Strategy* [note 53].

²⁹² *Ibid.*

²⁹³ RDCO, *Communications Plan* [note 119].

²⁹⁴ Project Interviewee 10, Regional District of Central Okanagan [note 59].

²⁹⁵ Province of British Columbia, *Interlinks* [note 5]; RDCO, *2020 Vision* [note 45].

²⁹⁶ Project Interviewee 10, Regional District of Central Okanagan [note 59].

²⁹⁷ Munro, “Growth plan” [note 64].

²⁹⁸ RDCO, *The Growth Management Strategy* [note 53], p. 7.

²⁹⁹ Rob Munro, “Local governments want to see change,” *The Kelowna Daily Courier*, June 20, 1999, p. A4.

that the RGS will only work if there is some move to more equitable power sharing in the future.³⁰⁰

The likely distributional equity of RGS implementation costs and benefits, is difficult to evaluate. It is reasonable to anticipate that the RGS will have some effects on the distribution of social costs and benefits in the region. The RGS document contains numerous commitments to promoting some degree of distributive equity including ensuring that the needs of all residents including youth, seniors and those without access to a car are considered in planning decisions, ensuring that new housing allows for a range of types, densities and affordability options.³⁰¹ It also contains commitments to the notion that all local governments should pay their fair share of the cost of addressing regional issues, recognizing that the amount each government can pay will be limited by its size and the makeup of its tax base.³⁰² The actual results, however, will not be evident for some years.

Conclusions

Overall, the RDCO RGS does not appear to be a model for effective, efficient or equitable promotion of the principles of ecological, economic, and social sustainability. The draft RGS bylaw is a step in the right direction. It does stress the importance of sustainability in regional growth planning and may encourage greater incorporation of sustainability considerations into planning decisions. However, it does not contain a vision, objectives or policies of sufficient strength or detail to ensure that sustainability considerations are incorporated into regional planning decisions. Due to the latitude afforded by the objectives and policies in the draft RGS, future planning decisions could be consistent with the RGS, but inconsistent with sustainability. The RGS bylaw also seems to suggest that there is a hierarchy of preferences that place economic and social sustainability over ecological sustainability. Nevertheless, the RGS process is not yet complete. The RGS framework, still in draft form, provides some hope that the final RGS bylaw and eventual implementation agreements will provide greater detail and ensure greater consideration of ecological sustainability. But it is too soon to know when they will be completed, what they will contain, or how much force they will have.

The RGS process was to some degree efficient in the sense that it did not carry out a significant number of additional studies or spend a lot of time or money on public consultations. However, these short-term efficiencies may prove to be long-term inefficiencies, because the RGS was developed with without the benefit of a more comprehensive analysis of the costs of growth or the constraints and capacities of the region to deal with growth. Likewise, the failure to consult the public with regard to their vision of the future of the region may also prove to be inefficient over the long term if the public demands changes in what was decided in the RGS. The Growth Management Steering Committee may have had a reasonably good knowledge of public sentiment from past public consultations. However, given the potential ecological,

³⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

³⁰¹ RDCO, *The Growth Management Strategy* [note 53].

³⁰² *Ibid.*

economic and social implications of future growth and how it is managed, failing to consult Central Okanagan public is not reflective of procedural equity. Again, however, it is important to remember that local governments are working with increasingly limited resources for public consultation.

The draft RDCO RGS has implications for sustainability for the Central Okanagan, the Okanagan-Shuswap and for BC. For the Central Okanagan, it is a step in the right direction in the sense that it is the first real effort to try to engage elected officials and staff members from all of the local governments in the region in a broad discussion to address issues of growth and incorporate sustainability considerations into planning from a regional perspective. Moreover, it has established a process that will likely lead to continued discussion regarding issues of growth, which may have positive implications in the future. However, in its current draft form, it does not appear sufficient to foster the wide range of changes in local government activities necessary to promote ecological, social and economic sustainability. The draft bylaw is a weak guide for the development of future OCPs in the Region and has set a fairly low standard for other initiatives to incorporate principles of sustainability into planning in the Central Okanagan.

The implications of this include the potential for continued low density sprawl development that encourages heavy reliance on single occupant vehicles and increasing congestion problems, and destroys critical ecosystems and wildlife habitat, leading to the continued extirpation of regional species. It also opens the door to growth that could exceed the capacity of the region's water and air resources to sufficiently renew themselves, and could destroy the scenic beauty and quality of life that has made the Central Okanagan a center of tourism for the province. While the Central Okanagan does not currently face growth problems of the same magnitude as Greater Vancouver or even the Nanaimo area, unless the RGS is strengthened and enforced through the implementation agreements, it could in the future. The implementation agreements may provide additional force in ensuring the incorporation of sustainability considerations into planning, but it may prove difficult to get the agreement of all the players on measures that are significantly stronger than those in the draft bylaw.

For the larger Okanagan-Shuswap, the fact that the RDCO RGS may not effectively protect the fragile ecosystems around the Central Okanagan that are home to many of the region's threatened and endangered species puts a potentially greater onus on the other regional districts in the region to preserve these ecosystems. The RDCO RGS may not contribute significantly to preventing continued declines in the overall environmental quality in the Okanagan-Shuswap. Moreover, the RDCO RGS may serve as a model for RGS development in the other regional districts in the region and may make it difficult for other regional districts and municipalities in the Okanagan-Shuswap to impose strong restriction on the size, amount and nature of development for fear of losing potential economic opportunities to the Central Okanagan. At the same time, the fact that RDCO has actually undertaken an RGS may provide incentive for the other regional districts in the sub-region who have thus far proven reluctant to undertake growth management planning to complete an RGS. For BC, the RDCO RGS creates the possibility that other Regional Districts and municipalities that wish to avoid significant restrictions on growth

and urban activities may view the RDCO RGS as a model to be followed. This could have negative implications for sustainability province wide.

The RDCO RGS still has potential as a mechanism for integrating principles of sustainability into planning. Certainly, the role of local governments in moving towards sustainability is a critical one and local governments in BC and elsewhere need to undertake growth management planning. The BC *Growth Strategies Act* has led some regional districts in the province to produce Regional Growth Strategies that promote the effective, efficient and equitable incorporation of sustainability considerations into planning. But the overall Okanagan case and the RDCO RGS underscore some of the weaknesses in the *Act*. Development of a Regional Growth Strategy remains voluntary, and many regional districts in BC have chosen not to undertake growth management planning at all. Secondly, the *Act's* flexibility in terms of what can be incorporated into an RGS allows acceptance of weak plans that do not sufficiently promote sustainability. A final problem associated with the *Growth Strategies Act* is the limited powers of the regional districts over their member municipalities. Member municipalities have to agree with the contents of the RGS, and the predictable result is a tendency for RGSs to be watered down by municipalities that are less sustainability oriented for a variety of reasons.

The RDCO RGS experience reflects many of the conundrums associated with incorporating sustainability considerations into planning. While it may be easy to lay the blame for weak plans on the elected officials and staff members who developed them, they are often largely responding to the wishes of the public and individuals and businesses with significant financial influence. For elected representatives, responding to the wishes of the public is a necessity for staying in office. But many politicians and officials feel they must respond specially to certain individuals and businesses who have vested interests in ensuring that conventional growth and economic development continue. Likewise, many members of the public still associate economic development and prosperity with growth that will bring new people and jobs into a region. In a province such as BC, where the public continually hears about high unemployment figures and a stagnant economy, curtailing growth or only allowing certain kinds of "sustainable" growth may sound like an unjustifiable economic sacrifice for current generations, especially in regions in the provincial interior, such as the Okanagan, where the costs of growth are not as apparent.

While many members of the public are increasingly indicating that they want sustainability considerations incorporated into decision making, few members of the public really seem willing to make the lifestyle changes associated with sustainability. This is not to say that some people are not making very strong efforts to live in a manner that is consistent with sustainability. However, while many people have made the easy sustainability lifestyle changes, such as taking up recycling or composting, the majority of people still drive, or aspire to drive, single occupant vehicles and own, or aspire to own, single family dwellings. One can argue that people make these choices because public transit and high density living options are not well developed enough and this is likely at least in part the case. However, it is not yet clear that, given a choice of more sustainable lifestyle options, the majority of people would choose them unless there

were clear individual costs associated with choosing a lifestyle that had more negative effects on sustainability.

Thus it is important not to be overly critical of initiatives such as the RDCO RGS. While the RDCO RGS falls short of meeting the standards of effectively, efficiently and equitably incorporating sustainability considerations into planning, perhaps those standards are unrealistic at the current time. Steps, albeit small, in the right direction and a slow movement towards sustainability may be all that we can realistically expect, particularly in smaller urban centres that have not experienced the direct costs of growth in the same way that larger urban centres have.

Local government planning that incorporates sustainability considerations is a critical part of the equation of moving towards sustainability. However, it is not the only part of the equation. The public and private businesses must also take the initiative and begin to incorporate principles of sustainability into their lifestyles and practices. An RGS that effectively incorporated all sustainability considerations into planning would not likely be accepted by the public in many regions in BC today. If it were imposed by a regional district, it would likely be overturned through public or private protest and would not meet sustainability criteria for procedural equity in planning. However, local government planning that takes steps toward sustainability can and must play an important role in encouraging the public and private businesses to adopt more sustainable lifestyles and practices.

It is only through a combination of initiatives by all levels of government, the public and private businesses that the slow process of moving towards sustainability will be achieved. Thus while many initial steps may fall short of meeting standards for incorporating sustainability considerations, they are important steps nonetheless. However accepting that initial planning efforts may fall short is not an excuse for complacency. Persistent efforts must be made to find opportunities to increase the degree to which sustainability considerations are effectively, efficiently and equitably incorporated into local and regional planning decisions through initiatives such as the RDCO RGS.

4 Case Study: Community/Crown Interface Zone

The Initiative

The Community/Crown interface resource management zone (CCI zone) is being developed as a component of the provincial Okanagan-Shuswap Land and Resource Management Planning (OSLRMP) process initiated in February 1996. The CCI zone extends “from the private land boundary to the visual height of land and across the major lakes of the Okanagan and Shuswap...” and “follows the ridge line of height of land visible from major travel corridors” in the Okanagan-Shuswap sub-region, essentially creating a wide strip of Crown land around urban and rural settlement areas.³⁰³ The management objectives and strategies associated with the CCI zone are intended to promote better coordination among provincial and local government agencies regarding land and resource management decisions made on the Crown land in the community/Crown interface area and encourage more sustainable land use in the interface area.

The CCI zone, and its associated objectives, was originally developed and proposed in 1997 by the four main regional districts of the Okanagan-Shuswap sub-region – the Okanagan-Similkameen Regional District (OSRD), the Regional District of Central Okanagan (RDCO), the North Okanagan Regional District (NORD) and the Columbia-Shuswap Regional District (CSRD). A CCI working group of the OSLRMP process, including representatives of the four regional districts, Ministry of Forests, Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks, Ministry of Energy and Mines, the forest industry and environmental groups have worked since 1997 to further develop and modify the CCI zone objectives and develop more detailed strategies to accompany the objectives. The CCI zone, which will be included as a section in the overall land and resource management plan being produced by the OSLMRP, was agreed to in principle in May 2000.

There were many factors underlying the development of the CCI zone. The interface area between Crown and private land area is where the effects of resource use in natural ecosystems spill over into urban and rural life in the form of impacts such as altered viewsapes, flooding, and changes to water quality and quantity. Thus local governments in the Okanagan-Shuswap are eager to have more influence over land and resource management decisions made on Crown land in the interface area. The interface area is also where the effects of urban and rural land use spill over into natural ecosystems. Crown land in the interface area has been utilized for urban expansion in the past and will be under pressure for urban expansion in the future in many areas of the Okanagan-Shuswap. Thus it is an area where environmental groups and some provincial agencies and local governments would like to ensure that the activities of communities are

³⁰³ Okanagan-Shuswap Land and Resource Management Planning Table (OSLRMPT), “Polygon Specific Resource Management Zone – Community/Crown Interface,” *Okanagan-Shuswap Land and Resource Management Plan*, Draft #6, Version 2, October 20, 1999.

consistent with principles of sustainability. The interface area in the Okanagan is particularly important from a sustainability perspective because it is where most of remaining habitat of endangered and threatened species in the region is located.

Background

Land and Resource Management Planning (LRMP) processes are BC provincial government sub-regional Crown land and resource management planning processes that were initiated in the early 1990s in many sub-regions of the province.³⁰⁴ They are participatory, consensus based planning processes generally with over 20 public table representatives from many sectors – such as forestry, environment, mining and public recreation – and government table representatives from federal, provincial, and local government agencies involved in Crown land and resource use in the sub-region.³⁰⁵ The goal of LRMP processes is for the table representatives to develop and come to consensus on a land and resource management plan that specifies how the Crown land and resources within the sub-region will be managed for the next ten years or longer. In many LRMPs, each table representative has one or more alternates and in some cases several additional sector constituents also participate in some aspects of plan development. However, only the table representatives can sign off in the final consensus with regard to the acceptability of the final plan, although they would likely only do so with the support of their constituents.

A key part of the LRMP process involves land use zoning. Table representatives divide the Crown land in the sub-region into several resource management zones and develop management objectives for each zone that specify how the land and resources within the zone are to be managed.³⁰⁶ Strategies are often developed to accompany each objective and specify in more detail how an objective is to be achieved.³⁰⁷ Most of the LRMPs in the province have utilized similar types of zones that have broadly similar intents, including protected area zones, general resource management zones, and special resource management zones, although the specific objectives and strategies associated with each type of zone differ from LRMP to LRMP. The majority of the plan area is loosely zoned as a general resource management zone (RMZ). In addition, the management objectives and strategies specified for the general RMZ are considered base-level management in all of the other zones in the sub-region, with the exception of protected area zones, which are managed as parks.³⁰⁸

Special RMZs, which are referred to as "polygon specific" RMZs in the OSLRMP, have objectives and strategies that are applied in addition to the general RMZ objectives and strategies

³⁰⁴ Province of British Columbia, *Land and Resource Management Planning: a statement of principles and process* (Victoria: Province of British Columbia, 1993).

³⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁰⁶ Province of British Columbia, *Diamond Land and Resource Management Plan* (Victoria: Province of British Columbia, 1995).

³⁰⁷ Okanagan-Shuswap Land and Resource Management Planning Table (OSLRMPT), *Okanagan-Shuswap Land and Resource Management Plan*, Draft #7, 1999.

³⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

in specific areas of the sub-region in order to provide for better management or additional protection of that area or the resources within it. The title of the polygon specific RMZ is based on the specific area or resource addressed. Examples of polygon specific RMZs in the OSLRMP include the, elk habitat RMZ, grizzly bear habitat RMZ, recreation RMZ and the community/Crown interface RMZ.³⁰⁹

In most LRMP processes it takes the table representatives three to five years to reach consensus on a land and resource management plan. If consensus is achieved, the plan is recommended to the provincial Cabinet. In the case of consensus plans, Cabinet generally approves the plan as it has been recommended and the plan becomes Cabinet policy. Following Cabinet approval, if the table wishes to have legal clout associated with the portions of the plan that deal with forest practices, it can apply to have the forestry portions of the plan declared by certain provincial Cabinet ministers as a Higher Level Plan, which is legally binding under the *Forest Practices Code*.³¹⁰ The non-forestry portions of the plan, however, can only be Cabinet policy; there is no appropriate provincial legislation to make them legally binding. If no consensus was achieved, Cabinet may choose to approve a particular version of the plan, or portions of the plan. It may also make changes to a version or portions of the plan before approving it.

The Okanagan Shuswap LRMP (OSLRMP) was initiated in February 1996. Its task was to create a land and resource management plan for the Okanagan-Shuswap sub-region of BC, which is in South Central BC and extends from Osoyoos in the south to Salmon Arm and Chase in the North. The OSLRMP process went through many stages. In 1996 and 1997, ground rules for the process were developed and a toolkit of information regarding the issues was compiled. In late 1997, sectors presented their visions of what should be included in the plan and the government developed a first iteration of the draft plan based on the participants' input up to that point, the sector visions and government expertise. Starting in 1997, the participants worked in smaller working groups to modify, and in some cases change completely, the zones, objectives and strategies that were developed in the first iteration draft of the plan. Each working group was based on a particular resource, such as wildlife or water, resource use, such as trapping or agriculture or area, such as the community/Crown interface or the West Slope Highlands, and worked on the corresponding sections of the plan to develop a set of objectives and strategies for that section that all members of the working group could agree with. Any participant could join any working group and the results of all the working groups were presented back to the participants as a whole at regular intervals so that all participants could comment on and make changes to the work of the various working groups. As of March 2000, the OSLRMP process was still ongoing and participants were working on draft 7 of the plan.³¹¹ Agreement-in-

³⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

³¹⁰ Daniel Johnston, "Summary of the Relationship between Higher Level Plans and LRMP's," *Handout at Okanagan Shuswap Land and Resource Management Plan Table Meeting*, May 1997.

³¹¹ Project Interviewee 9, Ministry of Forests, March, 2000.

principle among the table representatives on the CCI zone portion of the plan was achieved in May 2000.³¹²

Development of the Community/Crown Interface RMZ

The community/Crown interface polygon specific RMZ arose out of the sector visioning exercise in 1997. The four regional districts participating in the OSLRMP (the Okanagan-Similkameen Regional District, the Regional District of Central Okanagan, the North Okanagan Regional District and the Columbia-Shuswap Regional District) worked together to produce a joint vision, which they presented to the table in October 1997, as part of the sector visioning presentation portion of the process.³¹³ The vision proposed a community/Crown interface polygon specific resource management zone (CCI zone) and management objectives for that zone, which specified overall goals for the zone and acceptable and unacceptable activities in the zone.

From late 1997 to early 2000, the originally proposed CCI zone objectives were reviewed and modified several times by the community/Crown interface (CCI) working group, with input from other OSLRMP participants. During this time, the CCI working group, with input from other OSLRMP participants, also developed strategies for each objective that describe how the objective is going to be implemented. As a result of the discussions of the working group, the CCI zone management objectives were significantly modified from the original CCI zone proposal. Many objectives were revised, deleted, or moved to other sections of the OSLRMP draft plan. At the time of writing in March 2000, the CCI zone section of the overall OSLRMP plan was in draft 6 with further modifications based on a working group meeting on January 14, 2000 expected.³¹⁴

Draft 6 of the CCI zone section consists of two major parts. The first part, the introduction, provides detail on the location of the CCI zone boundary, identifies cross-boundary issues within the interface area, and outlines the goals of the CCI zone. The goals of the CCI zone include providing direction with regard to Crown land management where it affects settlement areas and local government jurisdictions and “indicate those areas where a higher level of care may be required to ensure community health, safety and stability.”³¹⁵ It also seeks to promote “coordination of environmental stewardship” between Crown and private land and “continuity of practice” and better cooperation and communication among agencies operating in the area to “balance interests” and ensure “consistency in management” in the interface.³¹⁶ A final key goal

³¹² *Ibid.*

³¹³ Regional Districts of Columbia-Shuswap (CSR), North Okanagan (NORD), Central Okanagan (RDCO), and Okanagan Similkameen (OSRD), *Community/Crown Interface Area: Overview of Local Government Interests in the LRMP*, Submission to the Okanagan-Shuswap LRMP, October 1997.

³¹⁴ Okanagan Shuswap LRMP Community Crown Interface Working Group (OSLRMP CCIWG), *Summary of Discussion*, January 14, 2000, Kelowna. OSLRMPT, “Polygon Specific” [note 1]; Project Interviewee 9, Ministry of Forests [note 9].

³¹⁵ OSLRMPT, “Polygon Specific” [note 1], p. 2.

³¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 2-3.

of the CCI zone is ensuring that “established local government processes for public consultation, impact assessment, and infrastructure planning;” are followed when land is designated for settlement use in the zone.³¹⁷

The second part of the CCI zone section contains seven management objectives, with intent statements and additional strategies, which reflect these goals and are intended to ensure that

- provincial and local governments consult and coordinate with each other, and recognize each other’s planning decisions when carrying out strategic and operational planning and activities in the interface area;
- resource development companies undertaking resource development activities in the CCI zone provide local governments with the opportunity for input into their planning processes and minimize negative impacts on adjacent communities;
- disposition of Crown land for new residential, commercial and industrial development in the CCI zone is directed to areas designated in Official Community Plans and Regional Growth Strategies, or in the case of communities without local land use plans, the ability of the local government to service the new development as well as the social, environmental and economic impacts of the development are considered before disposition;
- opportunities are provided by the provincial government to site local government infrastructure on Crown land when it can co-exist with other resource and environmental values;
- local governments are consulted before land in the CCI zone is included in reserves, such as parks or Wildlife Management Areas, that would preclude local government expansion within the CCI zone; and
- populated areas and the provincial forests are protected from forest fires in the interface area.³¹⁸

Minor modifications to the CCI zone section were made based on the January 14, 2000 working group meeting, comments from other table representatives, and the continued work of the CCI working group.³¹⁹ However, the final CCI zone section on which the table reached agreement in principle in May 2000 was little changed from draft 6.³²⁰

Effectiveness

At the outset, the original CCI zone proposal presented to the table in October 1997 appeared to incorporate many principles of sustainability. For example, according to the original CCI zone proposal, one of the general goals of the CCI was to promote healthy, sustainable

³¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

³¹⁸ *Ibid.*

³¹⁹ Okanagan-Shuswap Land and Resource Management Planning Table (OSLRMPT), “Polygon Specific Resource Management Zone – Community/Crown Interface,” *Okanagan-Shuswap Land and Resource Management Plan*, Draft #8, Version 2, April 2, 2000.

³²⁰ OSLRMPT, “Polygon Specific” [note 17]; Okanagan Shuswap Land and Resource Management Planning Table (OSLRMP), Housekeeping Items “Parked” During the May 5/6 Table Review, May 24, 2000.

communities.³²¹ The CCI zone was also intended to provide protection to ecosystems, water resources, air quality, visual quality, wildlife and habitat, soils and recreational opportunities by setting limits on what the provincial government and local governments can do in the interface area.³²² The original CCI zone proposal preamble included references to protecting and rehabilitating ecosystems, such as protecting “significant landforms and resources” and maintaining and/or enhancing “ecosystem health” and “ecosystem functions, linkages and attributes.”³²³ It advocated giving equal consideration to social, economic and ecological needs by balancing “economic development needs with social and environmental concerns” and providing sites on Crown land for facilities needed by communities, “where those facilities are compatible with the social, economic and environmental sustainability objectives of the plan.”³²⁴

The original CCI zone proposal also emphasized a holistic, ecosystem approach to planning. The preamble noted that “everything is connected to everything else” and that “administrative boundaries rarely correspond to natural boundaries.”³²⁵ In the presentation of the CCI zone vision to the table in 1997, the CCI zone was described as a “quid pro quo.”³²⁶ If the provincial government managed Crown land in the interface area surrounding communities in a manner consistent with local government objectives, local governments would manage their impacts on interface areas in a manner consistent with Crown land goals.³²⁷ Activities on Crown land, such as logging, mining and highway development, have effects on adjacent communities, and local governments have to depend on Crown land managers to achieve many local goals, such as “recreational access, visual quality, risk management, water quality and environmental protection.”³²⁸ Likewise, local government development activities on the urban and rural fringe can have significant effects on threatened and endangered species, water quality and flow regimes, which provincial government agencies wish to prevent. The intent of CCI zone, as stated in the original vision presentation, was to formalize the quid pro quo, in the form of a CCI zone, which would become Cabinet policy if Cabinet approves the OSLRMP, as a way of “keeping both sides honest.”³²⁹

In addition, several of the objectives contained within the original CCI zone proposal advocated ecological protection. For example, the proposal stated that “the use and/or alienation of Crown land (by sale or lease) for residential, commercial, and grazing uses adjacent to domestic water supply lakes should only occur where appropriate environmental studies have

³²¹ Regional Districts, *Community/Crown* [note 11].

³²² *Ibid.*

³²³ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

³²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

³²⁵ *Ibid.* p. 2.

³²⁶ Regional Districts of Columbia-Shuswap (CSRD), North Okanagan (NORD), Central Okanagan (RDCO), and Okanagan Similkameen (OSRD), *Community/Crown Interface Area: Overview of Local Government Interests in the LRMP*, Presentation to the Okanagan-Shuswap LRMP, October 1997.

³²⁷ *Ibid.*

³²⁸ Regional Districts, *Community/Crown* [note 11] p. 1; Regional Districts, *Community/Crown* [note 24].

³²⁹ Regional Districts, *Community/Crown* [note 24].

been carried out and can ensure no net environmental impact.”³³⁰ The proposal also advocated “protecting community watersheds from all uses that would adversely affect water quality”³³¹ and aimed to “ensure existence of acceptable levels of water quality and quantity.”³³²

Unfortunately, while the original CCI zone proposal was promising from a sustainability perspective, draft 6 of the CCI zone objectives and strategies is not as encouraging. Draft 6 of the CCI zone section does reflect some principles of sustainability. For example, the introduction to the CCI zone section recognizes the importance of the ecosystem approach stating that “everything is connected to everything else” and that local and provincial governments must work together to ensure sustainability and “economic, community and environmental stability.”³³³ The CCI goals also note that they are dealing with a “very finite amount of land,” which must be managed carefully to balance all interests and seeks to promote “coordination of environmental stewardship.”³³⁴ However, the CCI zone section also has many shortcomings from a sustainability perspective.

For example, many of the components of the original CCI proposal that were consistent with principles of sustainability are no longer part of the CCI zone section. The emphasis that the original CCI zone proposal placed on ecological, social and economic sustainability with interconnected systems and maintaining the structure and functioning of ecosystems was not incorporated into draft 6 of the CCI zone section. Likewise, almost all of the ecological protection objectives in the original proposal, such as protecting water quality and quantity, protecting the shoreline, and protecting visual quality were moved to other sections of the plan, removed from the plan entirely or deleted from the CCI zone section in part because they were already covered in other sections of the plan.³³⁵ While most of these objectives are still part of the overall plan, several environmental sector representatives expressed concerns regarding the absence of any significant mention of ecological concerns in the CCI zone management objectives.³³⁶

Moreover, many of the objectives may do little to change current activities in the CCI zone. Many objectives and strategies in the CCI zone section revolve around ensuring that local governments are consulted regarding provincial government and industry activities in the CCI zone. In the case of most provincial government activities, this consultation commitment is primarily a formalization of current consultation practices. For example, the provincial government already tries to ensure that land use decisions in the CCI zone are consistent with local government plans and consults with local governments regarding dispositions in adjacent

³³⁰ Regional Districts, *Community/Crown* [note 11] p. 7.

³³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

³³² *Ibid.*, p. 10.

³³³ OSLRMPT, “Polygon Specific” [note 1], p. 2.

³³⁴ OSLRMPT, “Polygon Specific” [note 1], p. 3.

³³⁵ OSLRMPT, “Polygon Specific” [note 1], Project Interviewee 9, Ministry of Forests [note 9].

³³⁶ Okanagan Shuswap Land and Resource Management Plan Table (OSLRMPT), *Rolling Draft Sector Comments*, September 1998.

areas.³³⁷ However, current practices are not perfect. The provincial government consults with local governments regarding crown land dispositions, but does not always listen.

Although consultation practices are improving, there are examples all over the Okanagan where the provincial government has disposed of crown land for activities such as gravel pits that have negatively impacted local communities from a sustainability perspective. It is hoped that the CCI objectives will improve consultation practices. Moreover, the objectives could help ensure that local governments do not have crown land disposition imposed on them in the future, if provincial government policy were to change, which is a distinct possibility. In addition, in the case of operational planning activities by resource development industries operating in the CCI zone, the CCI objective and strategies requiring these companies to communicate with local governments and address local government concerns in resource use plans could be a change from the status quo.³³⁸ But none of the consultation objectives and strategies will necessarily result in changes in the activities in the CCI zone, or ensure that sustainability concerns are incorporated into decision making. At best, they may provide local governments with more influence over activities in the CCI zone and promote greater communication and coordination among provincial and local government agencies and resource development companies.

Greater communication and coordination is a positive step for sustainability and may promote more of a holistic, ecosystem approach to managing land the interface area. However, greater local government influence in the CCI zone may have mixed implications for sustainability. In the case of local governments that are sustainability oriented, the consultation commitments contained in the CCI zone section may result in the greater incorporation of sustainability concerns into decision making in the interface area. In the case of local governments that are not sustainability oriented, it may do the opposite. As discussed in previous sections, while some local governments in the sub-region appear to be concerned about sustainability, some do not, and their level of concern about sustainability can change drastically with every local government election. One CCI objective in particular reinforces this concern. Objective 6 revolves around ensuring that local governments do not have land use designations such as parks, Wildlife Management Areas, or Agricultural Land Reserves, that would seem important for sustainability, imposed upon them by the provincial government in Crown land areas that the local governments had designated for expansion in their Official Community Plans or Regional Growth Strategies.³³⁹ While it is understandable that local governments do not want land use designations imposed upon them, some local governments could utilize this objective to promote land use decisions that are not sustainability oriented.

In addition, the objectives and strategies that do promote changes in the activities in the CCI zone have been weakened from their original intent. One of the original proponents of the CCI zone hoped to use the CCI zone to discourage municipalities and regional districts in the Okanagan-Shuswap from further alienating Crown land for development and encourage them to

³³⁷ OSLRMPT, “Polygon Specific” [note 1].

³³⁸ OSLRMP CCIWG, *Summary of* [note 12]; OSLRMPT, “Polygon Specific” [note 1].

³³⁹ OSLRMPT, “Polygon Specific” [note 1].

plan more effectively to accommodate growth with the land they already have.³⁴⁰ This goal was captured in an early draft objective stating “provide Crown land where it has been identified in Official Community Plans (OCPs) for community and industrial development.”³⁴¹ Although this still allowed expansion, it was hoped that it would force the municipalities and regional districts seeking to expand to engage in a broader discussion through their OCP process with the residents of those areas and other stakeholders with regard to whether expansion was desirable.³⁴²

When this was explained at the OSLRMP table, it prompted the following discussion:

- Participant 1 If you recall, Osoyoos municipality came and made a presentation to the LRMP table. They made it clear that they really need these areas to expand into for economic and settlement purposes and I don’t think that the CCI zone covers that.
- Participant 2 No that is quite intentional. I don’t think we should include that. I think that there needs to be a broader discussion as to whether Osoyoos should be able to swallow land. This would control them.
- Participant 1 So where does that leave cities like Penticton?
- Participant 2 Penticton is different. Campbell Mountain has been slated for development for eons. It is in the OCP, so that is covered. Osoyoos is not.

By the time the objective regarding Crown land alienation reached the draft 6 stage, it still allowed Crown land alienation for settlement purposes in the CCI zone, as long as it was planned out in an approved Official Community Plan (OCP). However, it also allowed Crown land alienation for settlement purposes in the CCI zone in the case of areas with no OCPs, as long as it was done in consultation with the local governments and the servicing requirements and “social, economic and environmental impacts of the proposal” were considered.³⁴³

This objective may encourage a broader discussion regarding the desirability of sprawl and may help limit crown land dispositions that have negative social, economic and environmental impacts. However, it does not seem to provide an extremely strong check on sprawl as a result of crown land disposition. The provincial government did not generally dispose of Crown land without consulting local governments in the first place, and under this objective, local governments that wish to expand into the CCI zone could in theory plan it in their OCPs or approve it in consultation with the provincial government. While it might not be easy to get provincial government approval for an OCP that advocates significant expansion into crown land, small incursions onto crown land would quite possibly be approved, given that the BC Assets and Land Corporation (BCALC), the provincial agency in charge of crown land disposition, has revenue targets to meet for the disposition of crown land.

³⁴⁰ Project Interviewee 2, Regional District of Central Okanagan, September 1997.

³⁴¹ Okanagan Shuswap Land and Resource Management Plan Table (OSLRMPT), “Crown Land (Upland),” *Management Objective Menu #5*, December 12, 1997.

³⁴² Project Interviewee 2, Regional District of Central Okanagan [note 38].

³⁴³ OSLRMPT, “Polygon Specific” [note 1], p. 7.

Although RDCO and NORD have policies not to seek Crown land for settlement purposes,³⁴⁴ many other municipalities and regional districts in the Okanagan-Shuswap do not. As pointed out in the above quote, one municipal government in the sub-region, the Town of Osoyoos, made a presentation to the LRMP table indicating that it plans to accommodate growth by expanding settlement onto the Crown land on its West Bench, which includes Canada's only desert and is critical habitat for red and blue listed species.³⁴⁵ The presenters indicated that "council is aware of, and values the desert ecology" but that "it is better to share, co-exist and blend to achieve the enviable lifestyle of Osoyoos with appropriate density that preserves the small town feel."³⁴⁶ While some of the other municipalities and regional districts have indicated that they do not favour accommodating population growth by expansion onto Crown land,³⁴⁷ they have not chosen to foreclose that option with the CCI zone either.

The fact that BCALC tried to have an objective introduced to the CCI zone section outlining revenue targets for crown land disposition in the Okanagan-Shuswap does not provide any comfort that BCALC will refrain from seeking to dispose of crown land for urban expansion in the future. However, the CCI working group members' refusal to consider incorporating this objective provides some reassurance that at least some local governments in the region wish to avoid expansion on to crown land.

Moreover, the CCI zone section does not address one of the key roots of the urban sprawl. Much of the current urban expansion in the sub-region is occurring on private land, as in the case of the Glenmore Highlands in Kelowna. One project interviewee observed the plan does little to ensure that local governments address urban growth:

I think that probably one of the largest aspects that is missing out of this [plan] is population growth and what is happening in the communities I think we might be maybe leaving too much up to local governments to understand that they are going to have to take care of it themselves.³⁴⁸

While the CCI zone had no capacity to address urban expansion onto private land, the fact that it does not address one of the most important sources of urban sprawl undermines its effectiveness at promoting sustainability.

Similarly, the overall ability of the OSLRMP to ensure that sustainability considerations are incorporated into urban and rural land use decisions is limited by the fact that it applies to the

³⁴⁴ Project Interviewee 2, Regional District of Central Okanagan [note 38].

³⁴⁵ Brad Elenko and John Slater, Town of Osoyoos, *Submission to Okanagan-Shuswap Land and Resource Management Plan Table*, December 1997.

³⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁴⁷ Project Interviewee 12, September 1999.

³⁴⁸ Project Interviewee 13, September 1998.

provincial government only and cannot direct the actions of local governments, particularly on non-Crown land. It was argued in the CCI zone vision presentation that the CCI resource management zone would establish a quid pro quo between the province and local governments to protect the interface area. Certainly, local governments have a critical role to play in promoting sustainability in the interface area through their influence over the actions of people and businesses within and beyond urban boundaries. However, because the OSLRMP cannot direct the actions of local governments, the CCI zone section suggests only that local governments “should consider the LRMP management objectives,” when making land use decisions within their boundaries that will affect the interface area.³⁴⁹

Because many of the general OSLRMP management objectives revolve around ecological protection, suggesting that local governments “should consider” OSLRMP objectives in decision making is a step in the right direction and may encourage local governments to get their houses in order. However, it does not ensure that principles of sustainability are incorporated into local government planning decisions in the interface area. It was pointed out at a recent CCI working group meeting that the CCI zone was originally intended to be more of a “two way street” with local governments managing private land and carrying out its zoning of Crown land in the interface area in accordance with the general OSLRMP management objectives.³⁵⁰ Since the OSLRMP cannot direct the actions of local governments, inserting stronger language may be pointless. Nevertheless, the CCI zone section has promoted a new understanding between the provincial and local governments that they will respect each other.

In order to encourage local governments to consider OSLRMP objectives in their activities on the Crown and private land in the interface area and on rest of the private land within their administrative boundaries, the OSLRMP document includes a section entitled “Advice to Local Government.” This section provides detailed advice on several OSLRMP objectives – concerning air quality, the community/Crown interface, water, fish and aquatic habitat, and wildlife – that the table felt local governments should implement within their boundaries. It includes statements, such as the following one for the CCI zone:

Local Governments are encouraged to recognize and model their land use decisions using objectives and strategies of the LRMP, including riparian area strategies, and strategies for the identification and protection of rare plant and wildlife species.³⁵¹

This section might be helpful in drawing local government’s attention to the issues that the table felt that local governments should consider and is definitely positive for sustainability. It provides no guarantees that local governments will do so. Nevertheless, the regional districts of the Okanagan-Shuswap have participated in the OSLRMP in good faith and have played a

³⁴⁹ OSLRMPT, “Polygon Specific” [note 1], p. 3.

³⁵⁰ OSLRMP CCIWG, *Summary of* [note 12], p. 1.

³⁵¹ Okanagan-Shuswap Land and Resource Management Plan Table (OSLRMPT), “Part 9 – Advice to Local Government,” *Okanagan-Shuswap Land and Resource Management Plan*, Draft #7, Version 3, February 9, 2000, p. 2.

significant role in the development of the CCI zone section. As a result, it seems unlikely that they would completely ignore the recommendations it contains. Moreover, the CCI zone and advice to local government sections also give the public something to point to if local governments are not following the objectives contained in the OSLRMP. Since local governments participated in and agreed to the OSLRMP, they may have some explaining to do to the public if they are seen to be seriously contravening the objectives it contains.

A proponent of the CCI section hoped that the CCI would encourage the regional districts in the sub-region to incorporate the objectives and strategies of the CCI zone into their own growth strategies, so the CCI zone objectives will constitute legally enforceable parameters on growth and will be applied within the regional districts and municipalities as well as on the urban fringe.³⁵² RDCO has already included a recommendation that the Regional District incorporate the OSLRMP management objectives into its local land use plans in its *Regional Growth Strategy Framework* document, although it is not included in its Regional Growth Strategy bylaw.³⁵³

One of the stronger CCI zone objectives that could encourage greater sustainability in the CCI zone is related to resource development activity rather than urban and rural land use. This objective currently states,

Ensure that operational plans, prescriptions, and permits contain measures that will minimize as much as practicable any potential negative resource development impacts on adjacent communities (e.g. visuals, flooding, debris flows, water quality and quantity etc.)³⁵⁴

The wording of this objective is weaker than the wording of the same objective in draft 1, which held that negative impacts from resource development activities should be minimized, and had to be addressed before development plans would be approved.³⁵⁵ As it is currently worded, the objective does not suggest that resource development activities should be blocked if they threaten to have significant adverse effects in the interface area. Nevertheless, this objective may promote some additional ecological protection in the interface area. The mining and forestry sectors expressed concerns with the wording, as minimize is defined in the OSLRMP as “bringing to zero.”³⁵⁶ Nevertheless, it was agreed to in principle in May 2000.³⁵⁷

³⁵² Project Interviewee 2, Regional District of Central Okanagan, September 1997.

³⁵³ Regional District of Central Okanagan (RDCO), *Growth Management Strategy Framework for the Central Okanagan*, Revised Draft, February 23, 1999; Regional District of Central Okanagan (RDCO), *The Growth Management Strategy for the Regional District of Central Okanagan*, Department of Regional and Community Planning, June 1999.

³⁵⁴ OSLRMPT, “Polygon Specific” [note 1], p. 5.

³⁵⁵ Okanagan-Shuswap Land and Resource Management Plan Table (OSLRMPT), “Polygon Specific RMZ – Community Crown Interface, *Okanagan-Shuswap Land and Resource Management Plan*, Draft #1, June 16, 1998.

³⁵⁶ OSLRMP CCIWG, *Summary of* [note 12].

³⁵⁷ OSLRMPT, “Polygon Specific” [note 17].

The CCI zone section does draw some strengths in terms of promoting sustainability from being part of overall OSLRMP plan, which contains some overarching principles of sustainability that also apply to the CCI zone. For example, the OSLRMP rolling draft expresses an overall goal of promoting ecological, social and economic sustainability in the sub-region.³⁵⁸ The plan promotes adaptive monitoring and evaluation of the management objectives and advocates implementing the plan and undertaking future associated initiatives in a participatory manner.³⁵⁹ Moreover, the OSLRMP itself has been an adaptive, iterative, participatory planning process that has likely fostered a greater commitment to community and place among participants. Likewise, the ecological protection objectives in the general management section of the OSLRMP plan will be implemented in the CCI zone. However, an original goal of the CCI zone was to provide extra protection, recognizing the special nature of the interface area, where communities affect ecosystems and damaged ecosystems affect communities.

The nature of the OSLRMP process and plan also imposed limits on the principles of sustainability that could be incorporated into the CCI zone. Budget and time limitations constrained the application of some sustainability principles. The OSLRMP process did not have sufficient funds or time for studies about the basic interconnections of ecosystem factors and the impacts on them, much less cumulative or indirect effects. Most decisions were based on the best guesses and advice from the experts in government agencies who relied on their own, generally substantial, knowledge and past research in the region. Likewise, some sustainability principles, such as economic equity, were not within the set scope of the OSLRMP process. Because the OSLRMP boundaries are based on forest district boundaries, it was difficult to take a real ecosystem approach, although efforts were made to provide the table with information on activities and planning decisions in areas adjacent to the OSLRMP boundaries. Likewise, the table representatives decided that they did not see the utility in spending time developing a vision of the specific future attributes of ecological, social and economic sustainability. As a result, engaging in backcasting was impossible even if it had been desired.

A key aspect of the OSLRMP process is that it is consensus based. The various participants – including forestry company associations, local governments, environmentalists and tourism associations – all had to agree on how to proceed and what went into the final plan. The sectors that benefit from or believe in existing land use practices, some of which may not be sustainable, resisted significant changes to those practices. Sectors seeking to apply principles of sustainability in planning may have seen the incorporation of even some principles as a victory and did not find it realistic to push for more. As one project interviewee noted,

³⁵⁸ Okanagan-Shuswap Land and Resource Management Plan Table (OSLRMPT), “Part 1 – Introduction,” *Okanagan-Shuswap Land and Resource Management Plan*, Draft #7, Version 5, February 18, 2000.

³⁵⁹ Okanagan-Shuswap Land and Resource Management Plan Table (OSLRMPT), “Part 11 – Implementation and Monitoring Direction,” *Okanagan-Shuswap Land and Resource Management Plan*, Draft #7, Version 2, November 25, 1999.

with a consensus based process... there isn't the voice of objectivity there that can speak for the ecosystem and say no you just don't. Instead we kind of split the difference or you find a way to mitigate and I really worry in places like the south Okanagan where it is so fragile that it is not a case of mitigating any more.³⁶⁰

Thus some principles of sustainability, such as maintaining natural structure and functioning of ecological systems, basing decisions on the precautionary principle and giving ecological, social and economic concerns equal consideration, were not fully incorporated into the overall plan or the CCI zone section. The result is incomplete progress towards sustainability, and probably just a slowing of damage, but the greater possibility of a plan that is implementable with existing political will.

The prospects for CCI zone implementation are also questionable due to uncertainty about implementation of the OSLRMP. If the OSLRMP table comes to consensus on the plan, Cabinet will likely approve the entire plan as recommended by the table. However, if the table does not come to consensus, Cabinet could decide to approve only some sections or versions of the plan, which may or may not include the CCI zone section, although this would be unlikely given that agreement in principle has been reached on the CCI zone section. If Cabinet approves the CCI zone section of the OSLRMP, either as part of the whole plan or as a separate section, it will have the status of Cabinet policy direction. This would not ensure implementation. Statutory decision-makers in provincial government agencies face no legal requirement to act in accordance with Cabinet policy.³⁶¹ While "such provisions would normally be taken into consideration by a statutory decision maker... technically they are not required to do so."³⁶² In practice statutory decision makers consider the policy direction from an LRMP when making a decision, but can take into account new information.³⁶³ If their decision deviates from the policy direction, a reason is expected.³⁶⁴

Most government officials involved with the OSLRMP maintain that the government will manage according to the objectives and strategies of LRMPs as much as possible.³⁶⁵ However, skeptics point to numerous questions raised over the implementation of the Commission on Resources and Environment (CORE) plans which preceded the LRMPs. There have been charges levied by many sides that the government is not implementing the plans at all in accordance with the plans' original intent. In many cases this can be attributed to inconsistent or vague objectives that had to be rewritten in order to be implemented or genuinely different understandings about the exact meanings or implications of plan's objectives. Moreover, it is not unknown for government officials to interpret certain objectives in ways that deviate slightly or significantly from the intent of the original objectives in response to pressures from lobby

³⁶⁰ Project Interviewee 11, Environmental Group, August 1998.

³⁶¹ Johnston, "Summary of" [note 8].

³⁶² *Ibid.* p. 2.

³⁶³ Project Interviewee 14, Ministry of Forests, April 1997.

³⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁶⁵ Project Interviewee 9, Ministry of Forests, [note 9].

groups, politicians or other government officials. More extreme deviation may result if a change in government leads to change in policy.

The government process support team that coordinates the OSLRMP process has recognized that the objectives in the final plan must be specific enough to be implemented and have little latitude for misinterpretation. Problems in implementation can also be linked to the sheer complexity and cost of trying to implement comprehensive regional plans that add significantly to the responsibilities of government ministries. Many government ministries do not have sufficient resources to fulfill their current mandate. If more responsibilities are added to their task lists, it is very likely that some of the new tasks will not be completed. The consultation requirements of the CCI could prove expensive for provincial and local agencies, and they may not have the necessary resources. Local governments participating in the process have already expressed concerns regarding the potential downloading of responsibilities from the provincial government associated with the OSLRMP in the absence of additional resources being provided to local governments from the province.³⁶⁶

Efficiency

Because the CCI zone work is part of the OSLRMP process, the efficiencies and inefficiencies of the CCI have been for the most part determined by the nature of the OSLRMP process. While the OSLRMP process was meant to be efficient, in practice some of the anticipated efficiencies have been difficult to achieve. The OSLRMP process has proven to be more time consuming and expensive than expected. It was initiated in February 1996 with a target completion date of June 1997. Three years later it appears likely to be finished in May 2000. Any decision-making process operating by consensus with over 30 table representatives of varying experience and knowledge levels to develop a comprehensive land use plan for a large sub-region is likely to be slow. There are critical tradeoffs between effectiveness, efficiency and equity. Considerable time in the first year and a half of the process had to be spent educating the participants regarding current land and resource management practices in the sub-region. Not taking the time to educate some of the participants might have had significant negative implications for the effectiveness and equity of the process. Likewise, the decision making of the table has seemed very slow at times despite evident opportunities to push the table representatives to make more decisions. However, doing so may have jeopardized the relationships and trust among the participants and the ultimate acceptability of the plan.

Although the original budget for the OSLRMP was low, the extra three years has required significant additional budget allocation. The budget of the table to run the meetings, cover participant's expenses, manage the data, provide facilitation, and distribute documents has been between \$200,000 to \$300,000 per year,³⁶⁷ not counting government staff time, with over 30 government officials devoting at least part of their time, and in a small number of cases all of their time to the OSLRMP. Private companies and non-governmental organizations have also

³⁶⁶ OSLRMPT, "Part 11 – Implementation" [note 57].

³⁶⁷ Project Interviewee 9 Ministry of Forests, October, 1998.

contributed significant staff resources to the process. There have, however, been efforts to cut costs. Meetings were held in halls rather than hotels, only the expenses of the table representatives themselves were covered and the table relied mainly on existing studies and in-house government expertise, rather than commissioning new studies with the exception of the multiple accounts assessment that will be discussed below. The lack of additional studies might have had negative impacts on the effectiveness of the planning process; nevertheless, the need for effectiveness and efficiency must be balanced. While the OSLRMP has been an expensive and time consuming process, the time and funding may be reasonable, given the magnitude and importance of producing a comprehensive Crown land use plan.

The CCI zone work was also intended to be efficient. It was introduced within the OSLRMP process to take advantage of an already ongoing Crown land planning process to save time and money by avoiding the need for a separate process. Since the OSLRMP was already in progress and had all of the key government and public participants and a decision-making structure in place, integrating the CCI zone into the OSLRMP avoided the time and expense of designing another decision making process and getting the participation of all the necessary stakeholders. But the consolidation also expanded the agenda of the OSLRMP. A government official with the Ministry of Forests interviewed for this project observed,

it is interesting to see how some of the stakeholders have used the LRMP to deal with specific Crown land concerns that they had long before the OSLRMP was started. It is like the “LRMP bus” came along and everyone hopped on.³⁶⁸

Nevertheless, the actual CCI zone portion of the OSLRMP has taken up a relatively small amount of the table’s time and funds. It has required only a few brief table discussions, several day-long CCI working group meetings and behind the scenes time spent by the process coordinators, the regional district officials and the local government coordinator for the OSLRMP process.

The OSLRMP endeavoured to coordinate the efforts of as many relevant government and non-government agencies and stakeholders across as many geographic boundaries as possible. Most important stakeholders, including provincial government representatives, regional district representatives and public representatives were members of the table. Efforts were also made to coordinate planning with the LRMPs in adjacent sub-regions. While the integration of agencies across geographical regions in the OSLRMP is not perfect, it appears better than it has been in other planning initiatives in the sub-region to date, and the CCI zone initiative has taken advantage of it.

The OSLRMP and the CCI zone work seem to have been an efficient means of seeking multi-stakeholder acceptance to try to ensure that important stakeholders will not undermine the process at a later date. The OSLRMP involved all stakeholders that felt that they had an interest in land and resource management planning in the sub-region. Significant efforts were made to

³⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

provide all of the table representatives with the information and at least some of the funding they needed to participate effectively and the facilitators have worked conscientiously to develop consensus among the table representatives.

Despite these efforts, full acceptance by all stakeholders may not necessarily be achieved for a variety of reasons. For example, the government chose not to cover the wages that some public table representatives would lose by participating and thus some stakeholders could not participate fully in the process and may not accept the end results. It is also possible that some table representatives have not represented their constituency fully enough to ensure that all stakeholders buy-in to the plan in the end. Even those who are at the table may not be able to reach full agreement without interminable discussion. If the table cannot come to agreement and Cabinet has to select the final plan, it is possible that there will be even less acceptance of the plan by some stakeholders. In the case of the CCI, however, RDCO and later the local government coordinator worked to consult with and foster agreement among all Regional Districts and other table representatives to ensure that they buy in to the CCI zone component of the plan.

The OSLRMP process was intended to base decisions at least in part on a full cost accounting of the ecological, social and economic costs and benefits of various activities through a multiple accounts assessment of the current and future economic, social and ecological costs of current land and resource management practices and the land and resource management scenario that the plan would produce. However, due to the complexity of the analysis and the lack of data and resources within the government, and the desire to wait for a concrete proposed land and resource management scenario from the table, the multiple accounts assessment of the proposed land and resource management scenario was not expected to be made available to the table until after they had reached agreement-in-principle.³⁶⁹ By that time, the table had already made most of the decisions regarding the objectives and strategies to be included in the final plan without the benefit of consulting the multiple accounts assessment. While the decisions they had made by that point were not irreversible, it may have been more efficient to have the multiple accounts assessment of draft scenarios completed earlier in the process.³⁷⁰

Efforts were also made to ensure that the OSLRMP plan and the CCI zone section will be effective for as long as possible without having to be replaced by trying to make the objectives and strategies specific enough to be implementable without having to be reworked, unlike some of the CORE and LRMP planning processes that preceded it. However, since the table representatives in the OSLRMP did not develop a long term vision to guide their planning process, the CCI zone section and the OSLRMP may have to be replaced sooner than anticipated. Moreover, if the provincial and local government agencies in the sub-region do not have sufficient resources to implement the OSLRMP or CCI zone, the whole OSLRMP process may have been a fairly inefficient exercise.

³⁶⁹ Project Interviewee 9, Ministry of Forests, July 29, 1999.

³⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

Equity

The OSLRMP, and therefore the CCI, was definitely intended to be procedurally equitable. Every public group that expressed an interest in participating was invited to participate in some form, either as an individual sector that gets to send one or two table representatives or by joining with other public groups to form a coalition sector that is permitted to send one to five table representatives. Decisions at the table were made by consensus and every table representative was permitted to speak or ask whatever questions on whatever subject he or she chose. Table representatives were reimbursed for their expenses for traveling to the table meetings. The original CCI zone proposal was submitted by the regional districts acting under the direction of Regional District Boards who were elected by the public. Any public table representative had the right to participate in the CCI working group to further develop the CCI zone proposal and even if they not participate in the working group they had the opportunity and right to disagree with any objective or strategy in the plan, in which case it would not go forward as a consensus item.

Despite these efforts to ensure that the OSLRMP is procedurally equitable, the reality is as a government official has noted “some sectors are more equal than others.”³⁷¹ While all of the sectors may theoretically have had equal opportunities to examine, comment on and participate in the development of the OSLRMP plan, including the CCI zone section, in reality several participants may not have been able to utilize this opportunity effectively. The sector representatives varied significantly in their background and experience, which influenced their abilities to participate in and therefore influence the outcome of the OSLRMP discussions. They also varied significantly in the time and funds available to them to support their participation. The provincial government had a very strong influence over the process due to its greater access to expertise and resources. Nevertheless, the OSLRMP remains a relatively equitable process on a procedural level.

The distributive equity implications of the CCI zone are hard to predict. The majority of costs associated with the CCI zone will likely be borne by the provincial and local governments, as they will have to implement the additional management and consultative requirements in the CCI. The resource sectors may also bear some increased management costs in association with the CCI zone, if resource extraction activities if the objective requiring them to minimize potential negative resource development impacts on adjacent communities, as much as practicable, is accepted by the table.

Conclusions

Overall, the CCI zone initiative has not been a perfect model for effective, efficient or equitable promotion of the principles of ecological, economic, and social sustainability. Nevertheless it has some strengths. By piggy-backing on the OSLRMP process, the development of the CCI zone has been a relatively efficient and equitable means of promoting sustainability. The potential effectiveness of the CCI zone section is enhanced by its successful reflection of some

³⁷¹ Project Interviewee 9, Ministry of Forests, [note 9].

principles of sustainability. It will likely promote greater cooperation in the interface areas and will continue to draw the attention of both provincial and local government agencies to the importance of ensuring sustainability the interface area. It has also caused the regional districts in the sub-region to engage in greater discussion and cooperation regarding the common challenges that they face in ensuring sustainable land use in the interface than they have in the past. However, its overall effectiveness in fostering ecological, social and economic sustainability in the interface area may be limited by the primarily consultative nature and weakness of its objectives, and the lack of mechanisms for ensuring that local governments will implement the CCI zone objectives and strategies and the overall OSLRMP objectives and strategies. Thus the potential overall benefits of the CCI zone in addressing urban and rural land use pressures in the interface area remains uncertain.

The CCI zone initiative has some implications for sustainability in the Okanagan-Shuswap. The fact that the CCI zone exists and the CCI discussion occurred has changed the longer-term context for pursuing sustainability in the Okanagan-Shuswap sub-region. The interface area is a critical area in which land use practices by resource users on Crown land can have significant effects on the health, ecosystems and quality of life of the local communities, and land use practices by local communities can have significant effects on the ecosystems and resource users on Crown land. The interface area is particularly vital in the Okanagan-Shuswap because the quality and quantity of water in community watersheds in the urban and rural interface area are major concerns, because urban expansion is threatening to damage ecologically sensitive hillsides, and because the vast majority of the last remaining undeveloped fragments of threatened and endangered species habitat fall in the interface area. Recognizing and trying to respond to these concerns through the CCI zone is an important aspect of moving towards sustainability in the Okanagan-Shuswap.

The CCI zone has also further reinforced awareness that local and provincial governments need to work cooperatively to move towards sustainability. While provincial and local governments have to some degree cooperated on the management of the interface area in the past, the CCI zone initiative forces a much more explicit and formal system of cooperation and application of the ecosystem approach, which will likely have positive implications for sustainability in the Okanagan-Shuswap. Moreover, due to the consultation processes that it may require, the CCI zone may illuminate decision making in Crown land disposition and resource development in the interface area, particularly where the local government involved wishes to manage the interface sustainably. In addition, it has exposed some of the local governments in the sub-region that are less sustainability oriented to the thinking of local governments that are more sustainability oriented, which may be very important for fostering changes in attitudes and practices on the part of the local governments that are less sustainability oriented.

Nevertheless, the weakness of many of the CCI objectives is worrisome. The CCI zone objectives and strategies will not prevent residential, commercial and industrial development in the CCI zone. The fact that the CCI working group, which included representatives from the four regional districts, did not agree to an objective that prevented further urban expansion into the CCI zone, and included objectives emphasizing the need for opportunities to site

infrastructure in the CCI zone and stating that local governments must be consulted before land designations are made that would interfere with plans for urban expansion into the CCI zone, suggests that at least some of the regional districts in the sub-region plan future urban expansions into the CCI zone or at the very least wanted to keep all of their options open. While there are statements indicating that sustainability issues, such as ecological considerations, will be addressed before expansion is allowed to occur, any continued growth of urban boundaries is likely to have negative sustainability implications. Moreover, considering the many factors that make the interface area special from a sustainability perspective, the fact that there are no ecological protection objectives specific to the CCI zone may not ensure that some of these sustainability issues that are specific to the interface area are effectively addressed. Finally, the fact that local governments only have to consider OSLMRP ecological protection objectives in the interface area does not provide any assurance that the local governments that are less sustainability oriented will act in a manner that is consistent with sustainability.

Because of these shortcomings, it is possible that the CCI zone will do little to help prevent continued sustainability problems in some areas of the interface in the Okanagan, including the extirpation and extinction of some species in the Okanagan-Shuswap, damage to ecologically sensitive hillsides and unsustainable urban sprawl.

The CCI zone work has broader implications for BC. Although the OSLRMP CCI zone section has many shortcomings, the CCI zone idea and the notion that greater coordination and promotion of sustainability is required in the interface area is a very important concept from a sustainability perspective. If this concept were applied in other LRMPs with stronger objectives and strategies, it could play a significant role in promoting sustainability. Likewise, the lessons learned through the CCI zone process could guide steps to greater provincial and local government cooperation in managing the community/Crown interface in other LRMPs and in other jurisdictions. Unfortunately, the fact that the CCI zone may not provide sufficient ecological protection in the interface area may mean the extinction of some threatened and endangered species that are found nowhere else in the province or in Canada.

It would be easy to conclude that due to its shortcomings, the CCI zone as part of the OSLRMP, is not a perfect mechanism for integrating principles of sustainability into planning. Certainly, the CCI zone experience demonstrates some potential difficulties associated with trying to develop a plan that incorporates principles of sustainability using a procedurally equitable process that involves all stakeholders with an interest in the issue under discussion when some stakeholders have a strong interest in ensuring that there are no major changes to the status quo. However, the CCI zone will likely have some positive implications for sustainability and promoting the application of principles of sustainability the interface area through plans such as LRMPs is needed if there are to be significant improvements in land management in areas facing growth pressures. Having objectives that are consistent with sustainability incorporated into plans with political and perhaps some legal weight is an important step towards sustainability, even if the process is difficult and the resulting plan is highly imperfect.

The CCI zone component of the OSLRMP is certainly imperfect from a sustainability perspective and whether the local governments in the Okanagan-Shuswap region will voluntarily enact many of the CCI and OSLRMP objectives within and beyond their boundaries remains to be seen. In the end, real changes in the interface area may require changes in the provincial government legislation governing local governments. Plans that incorporate sustainability considerations are a key part of the equation of moving towards sustainability – but they are not the only part of the equation. As one of the project interviewees observed, “the LRMP is just another level that this type of change can be worked on.”³⁷² Thus, despite its shortcomings, the CCI zone is just one more step in process of moving towards sustainability. For some of the local governments in the Okanagan-Shuswap that are less sustainability oriented, the CCI zone could be considered a big step forward.

³⁷² Project Interviewee 2, Regional District of Central Okanagan [note 38].

5 Case Study: The Salmon River Watershed Roundtable

The Initiative

The Salmon River Watershed Roundtable (SRWR) is a watershed stewardship and planning initiative that grew out of the Salmon Arm municipal government Environment Committee around 1994.³⁷³ Over the last six years, the members of the SRWR have worked on developing a ‘living’ plan aimed at promoting the ecological, social and economic sustainability of the Salmon River Watershed in the northern part of the Okanagan-Shuswap region. During this time, the SRWR has also been actively promoting and coordinating voluntary environmental stewardship and restoration activities on private lands along the Salmon River. It has also tried to educate the citizens of the watershed, particularly youth and children, with regard to sustainability and stewardship.

The Salmon River Watershed is a 1510 km² watershed that extends northwest from Salmon Lake in the Thompson-Nicola Regional District, which is outside the Okanagan-Shuswap region, to Salmon Arm Bay of Shuswap Lake in Salmon Arm, which is located in the Columbia-Shuswap Regional District and is part of the Okanagan-Shuswap region.³⁷⁴ The Salmon River flows eastward from Salmon Lake into Shuswap Lake and is considered a tributary of the South Thompson River, which drains Shuswap Lake and therefore is part of the Fraser River basin.³⁷⁵ In contrast to the other cases examined, the Salmon River Watershed Roundtable (SRWR) is an initiative being carried out primarily by concerned local citizens who live in the watershed. However, it has at various times had significant local, provincial and federal government participation from agencies such as Environment Canada, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans and the provincial Ministry of Forests. It has also had corporate participants, including the local logging company, Riverside Forest Products.

Some of the key factors underlying the creation of the SRWR included broad concerns on the part of some local citizens with regard to the overall sustainability of the Salmon River watershed and specific concerns with regard to water quality and quantity in the Salmon River, due to problems such as riverbank erosion and the loss of streamside vegetation along the river, and the impact of water quality and quantity on the fish in the river. Since much of the land along the Salmon River is privately owned, water quality and quantity in the river is significantly affected by activities on private land. Thus creating an initiative that could address activities on private land by getting the buy-in of the local landowners was key to the success of the SRWR.

³⁷³ Project Interviewee 15, Tom Brighthouse, Salmon River Watershed Roundtable Participant, May 1997; Project Interviewee 16, Neils Christiensen, Salmon River Watershed Roundtable Participant, May 1997.

³⁷⁴ Quadra Planning Consultants, *The Salmon River Watershed: An Overview of Conditions, Trends and Issues: Technical Report*, prepared on behalf of the Salmon River Watershed Roundtable (West Vancouver, March 1996).

³⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

Background

The Salmon River Watershed Roundtable (SRWR) emerged out of the Environment Committee established by the District of Salmon Arm in 1991.³⁷⁶ The Environment Committee had been established in response to public demand for such a committee articulated in the “Strong Communities of the 90s” process conducted by the District.³⁷⁷ The District of Salmon Arm had just had four “green” councilors elected, replacing the development-oriented council that had been in place for many years.³⁷⁸ Dorothy Argent, one of the “green” District councillors, became Chair of the District’s Environment Committee.³⁷⁹ The Environment Committee met for several years discussing what needed to be done in the area and hearing presentations from people knowledgeable with regard to various environmental issues in the District.³⁸⁰ During that time, the membership of the Environmental Committee grew to include members of local and provincial government agencies and members of the public from all around the Salmon River valley. Anyone who wished to participate in the committee was welcome to join. According to Neils Christensen, a member of the SRWR:

By 1994 the number of people associated with us was clearly beyond the district. Dorothy had invited some of the participants, but I think that many of them just showed up by word of mouth. At that time we had 20 maybe more regular participants in the meetings.³⁸¹

Field restoration activities for the SRWR began through the Salmon River Restoration Committee, which was a separate environmental group at that time that had been started by First Nations people in the area.³⁸² Some members of the District Environment Committee also joined the Salmon River Restoration Committee and individuals from both committees began to work together on planning and restoration activities, such as bank stabilization, along the Salmon River. At this time, the group tried to get local landowners involved in the initiative.³⁸³ According to Tom Brighthouse, a long time member of the SRWR,

One day about three years into it, I realized that we had never had a landowner attend a meeting. One night I realized that I’ve got a lot of ex-students who are farmers down there and so I phoned about eight and said look we’ve got this committee and I said I know farmers don’t like these kinds of committees but this is important because this

³⁷⁶ Project Interviewee 15, Brighthouse [note 1]; Project Interviewee 16, Christensen [note 1].

³⁷⁷ Project Interviewee 15, Brighthouse [note 1].

³⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁷⁹ Project Interviewee 15, Brighthouse [note 1]; Project Interviewee 16, Christensen [note 1].

³⁸⁰ Project Interviewee 16, Christensen [note 1].

³⁸¹ *Ibid.*

³⁸² *Ibid.*

³⁸³ Project Interviewee 15, Brighthouse [note 1]; Project Interviewee 17, Mike Wallis, Salmon River Watershed Roundtable Project Coordinator, May 1997.

committee can help to stabilize your banks where you are losing land. And they said well are they going to try and put trails through our property? And I said no, no, no. If we help get you money to fence back from the banks of the river it will be green space and that certainly doesn't mean that we are going to push for bike trails. So three of them showed up and it hasn't been the same three all along, but at least that was the beginning of the farmers attending.³⁸⁴

Having the participation of the ranchers was key to the success of the restoration activities, since 80 percent of the land along the Salmon River is privately owned, primarily by ranchers.³⁸⁵

In 1994, the group put together a mission statement, which has remained the mission statement of the Salmon River Watershed Roundtable to date. This mission statement is as follows,

Our mission is to be a catalyst to achieve and maintain a healthy Salmon River Watershed through coordinated management of all resources, respect for all concerns and co-operative, positive action.³⁸⁶

In 1995 the group held a strategic planning session to discuss their “mission, obstacles, strategic direction and implementation plan for the next year.”³⁸⁷ Shortly after the strategic planning session the group, still called the Environment Committee, decided that since it was taking a watershed, rather than a District focus, and had become a group of citizens independent of the District of Salmon Arm that it should rename itself to reflect these new realities.³⁸⁸ Thus the name Salmon River Watershed Roundtable (SRWR) was adopted. Over the past six years the SRWR, has accomplished many things in planning, field action and education.

Activities of the Salmon River Watershed Roundtable

PLANNING

Since 1994, the SRWR has engaged in many open planning sessions to discuss the future of the watershed.³⁸⁹ The overall approach to this planning has been to try to ensure openness and understanding. Anyone in the watershed has been welcome to participate in any or all of these planning sessions. As part of its efforts to draw people in from all around the community, the

³⁸⁴ Project Interviewee 15, Brighthouse [note 1].

³⁸⁵ Project Interviewee 18, Mike Romaine, Department of Fisheries and Oceans, June 1997.

³⁸⁶ Salmon River Watershed Roundtable (SRWR), *Salmon River Watershed Roundtable Management Model – Draft 1*, July 1, 1999, p. 2.

³⁸⁷ Project Interviewee 16, Christiensen [note 1].

³⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁸⁹ Project Interviewee 15, Brighthouse [note 1]; Project Interviewee 16, Christiensen, [note 1]; Project Interviewee 21, Salmon River Watershed Roundtable Participant, May, 1997; Project Interviewee 20, Fred Mah, Environment Canada, June 1997.

Roundtable sends mailouts to anyone who participated in any of its regular planning meetings or any of its special community meetings that were held all around the watershed in order to inform community members about the Roundtable. According to Neils Christensen:

The size of our mailing list is about 150 and that that list has grown partly from people who come to what were the Environment Committee meetings and then they became the Roundtable meetings once a month, but there was a period in 95 when we held community meetings in each of four locations and we did that once a month in each of those four locations and so people who came to those also wound up on the mailing list.³⁹⁰

The SRWR's planning process is and has always been a very detailed consensus based decision-making process in which a lot of time was spent ensuring that everyone participating understood what was being decided and agreed to the decisions made. In the words of Neils Christensen,

My fundamental inclination is to work with what I call consensus where you talk around about it until you think you all agree what it is you are talking about and then you all arrive at some decision and take some more time because so and so up here doesn't like this wording and so and so over here thinks that it is going too far. So you talk some more and finally you find. Hopefully you discover some things that are new and different where you can all say oh good, not only good or not only okay, but wow! I never thought of that. Let's do it that way.³⁹¹

To assist in the planning and educate its participants, the Roundtable has held seminars and workshops on many topics, such as forestry and agriculture, bringing experts in from many places.³⁹² In this manner, the SRWR has produced mission statements and action plans for each of its years of operation.

In 1994, the SRWR agreed to participate in a pilot project by Environment Canada lead by Fred Mah.³⁹³ The pilot project was to have a community based group such as the SRWR undertake the development of ecosystem goals, objectives and indicators for watershed sustainability based on a framework developed by the Canadian Council of Ministers of Environment (CCME).³⁹⁴ The ecosystem goals, objectives and indicators process had been utilized in other jurisdictions, such as the Great Lakes.³⁹⁵ But these other processes had only allowed selected experts to participate on behalf of the public, rather than allowing for a truly

³⁹⁰ Project Interviewee 16, Christensen [note 1].

³⁹¹ *Ibid.*

³⁹² Project Interviewee 20, Mah [note 17].

³⁹³ Project Interviewee 20, Mah [note 17].

³⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

public process in which any member of the public was able to participate.³⁹⁶ Environment Canada thus decided a pilot project that involved the public was needed and selected the Salmon River watershed, based on the work that had been done up to that point by the Environment Committee, as the best potential pilot project area in BC.³⁹⁷

When Environment Canada approached what was then the Environment Committee in late 1992 regarding the possibility of conducting a pilot project using the ecosystem goals, objectives and indicators, the Environment Committee indicated that it would think about it and contact Environment Canada when it was interested.³⁹⁸ The SRWR contacted Environment Canada in 1994 and agreed to participate in the pilot project. Thus Environment Canada and the Salmon River Watershed Roundtable formed a partnership to test the CCME ecosystems goals, objectives and indicators framework.³⁹⁹

The SRWR already had its own watershed planning process in place when it agreed to participate in the CCME pilot. It was, in the words of Mike Wallis, project coordinator for the SRWR, “in spirit the same, but not as well structured” as the CCME process.⁴⁰⁰ Participating in Environment Canada’s pilot project provided the SRWR with more funding to have information gathered on the state of the watershed, publicize planning events and stage information and planning workshops with presenters and facilitators from across Canada and the United States.

The ecosystem goals, objectives and indicators pilot project took several years to complete. According to Fred Mah of Environment Canada,⁴⁰¹ the first stage consisted of information gathering with consultants hired to identify what the problems were in the watershed and what information was available. The consultants then wrote up a report that identified these problems and outlined potential solutions. This report was circulated by the SRWR to the various communities in the watershed. In December 1995, after the report had been circulated for about a month, a two-day workshop was held in Falkland at which a consensus-based facilitated process was utilized to develop a vision and ecosystem goals and objectives for the watershed.

About 120 people attended the workshop and everyone participated in developing the vision, goals and objectives based on the question “What do you want in the watershed 20 years from now?” At this workshop, the SRWR developed its first strategic plan, which contained four elements:

- A 20 year vision or desired state of the watershed.
- Obstructions standing in the way of the vision.
- Strategic directions to deal with the obstructions.

³⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰⁰ Project Interviewee 17, Wallis [note 11].

⁴⁰¹ Project Interviewee 20, Mah [note 17].

- Goals or activities to implement the strategic directions.⁴⁰²

The SRWR incorporated the vision developed in the strategic plan into its ecosystem goals and objectives in 1996.⁴⁰³

In the same manner, a workshop was held in March 1997 to develop ecosystem indicators to test whether the ecosystem goals and objectives that had already been developed were being met.⁴⁰⁴ Fred Mah described the approach to the March 1997 workshop.⁴⁰⁵ Prior to the workshop a consultant had been hired to draw up a list of suggested indicators and the rationale for each. The workshop participants were encouraged to select and add to the list of suggested indicators as they wished. Experts were brought in from Vancouver to make presentations regarding the various indicators to the workshop participants. Participants were able to ask the experts any questions that they wished. In the end, the indicators workshop ran out on time and the indicator list was not shortened as much as Environment Canada would have liked.

In 1997, following the indicators workshop, the SRWR indicated that it planned to continue with its planning efforts and ultimately intends to produce an Integrated Watershed Restoration Plan using the inventory data gathered through a more recent SRWR project funded by Forest Renewal BC. This plan is intended to be a “living” plan described as follows by Neils Christensen:

I don't see us ever having a plan in the sense that we will have a document that says this is our plan. What I picture is that there will be pieces of this thing that keep falling into place and some of those pieces may even be revised over time before the last pieces are put together. It is a working document.⁴⁰⁶

The strategic planning activities of the SRWR have declined somewhat over the past few years. As of July 1999, the indicator list had not yet been finalized by the SRWR.⁴⁰⁷ However, the SRWR still develops an Annual Work Plan every year, using the Strategic Plan developed in 1995 as a guide.⁴⁰⁸ Its Annual Work Plan is comprised of its Annual Action Plan, work plans of projects to be completed during the year and work plans of the watershed stewardship coordinators.⁴⁰⁹ The Annual Action Plans are a key part of the Annual Work plan and identify the specific activities that it will take on in the watershed based on the funding available. In

⁴⁰² SRWR, *Salmon River* [note 14].

⁴⁰³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰⁴ Project Interviewee 20, Mah [note 17];

⁴⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰⁶ Project Interviewee 16, Christensen [note 1].

⁴⁰⁷ Project Interviewee 16, Neils Christensen, Salmon River Watershed Roundtable Participant, July 1999.

⁴⁰⁸ SRWR, *Salmon River* [note 31].

⁴⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

1999, the SRWR indicated that at some point in time as conditions in the watershed change, the Strategic Plan will become outdated and will have to be revised.⁴¹⁰

The SRWR has also participated in outside planning initiatives. For example, it was an active participant in the provincial government Okanagan-Shuswap Land and Resource Management Plan (OSLRMP) process that started in 1996 and was still ongoing in March 2000. The OSLRMP was a participatory process involving stakeholders from around the Okanagan Shuswap region to produce a plan that will have a significant influence over how crown land in the region is managed. Likewise, in 1997 the SRWR worked with over twenty other community based watershed groups in BC to establish the BC Watershed Stewardship Alliance.⁴¹¹ SRWR hoped that type of regional roundtable would allow the various watershed roundtables in the region to engage in communication as well as joint regional planning and it would ease the burden on governments and bureaucracies who cannot afford to send a representative to each individual watershed roundtable meeting.⁴¹² Fred Mah noted that such an alliance could potentially also significantly increase the political clout of these community based watershed groups.⁴¹³

FIELD ACTION

Many key people in the SRWR believe that the field component of the SRWR has been central to the success of the Roundtable. Field action was started early in the process based on the notion that it is critical to “walk the talk”⁴¹⁴ and that the “field action would feed the planning process and you would get a loop going on between the two that would drive the momentum of the process.”⁴¹⁵ The planning and field action activities of the SRWR have proven to be closely linked. Planning is undertaken to determine what field action will be conducted and where for each year. Information from the restoration and monitoring activities, which are part of the field action, is then fed back into the planning process.⁴¹⁶

SRWR field action is mainly focused on restoration work on private land. Restoration activities consist primarily of trying to prevent soil loss and bank erosion by fencing in cattle to prevent them from going right down to the edge of the river, and planting trees along the river to stabilize the banks.⁴¹⁷ Other restoration activities include the construction of fish weirs and the removal of gravel from sand bars so the salmon can cross them as they travel up the river.⁴¹⁸ Other field action activities include water quality testing, monitoring of tree survival and

⁴¹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹¹ Project Interviewee 19, Dorothy Argent, Salmon River Watershed Roundtable Participant, May 1997.

⁴¹² *Ibid.*

⁴¹³ Project Interviewee 20, Mah [note 17].

⁴¹⁴ Project Interviewee 18, Romaine [note 13].

⁴¹⁵ Project Interviewee 17, Wallis [note 11].

⁴¹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴¹⁷ Project Interviewee 17, Wallis [note 11].

⁴¹⁸ *Ibid.*

growth, and bird counts.⁴¹⁹ In 1997, the SRWR indicated it was also initiating some restoration work on Crown land in the watershed.⁴²⁰ Monitoring is also a critical aspect of the field action undertaken by the SRWR. Early on the SRWR decided that it should have the volunteers, such as school groups, that planted trees as part of their restoration work, come back and water and check on their trees. Mike Wallis described what resulted from this approach:

the school groups have come back to water their trees and do pest control, to make sure the beavers don't chew down the trees. And you realize here that what are they doing there is they are monitoring; they are looking at their trees and they have come out to water their trees and seen some chewed up by beaver and they have come to us and said something is wrong with my tree. We say, great let's go see. That's a beaver problem, what do you want to do about that? So we put beaver guards on the trees. That is a field action, so you have this loop, field action, monitoring, field action and it goes on and on.⁴²¹

A large portion of the SRWR's early field action was funded through the federal government's Fraser River Action Plan (FRAP), administered by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans and Environment Canada. According to Dorothy Argent:

The Fraser River Action Plan is what I would really give credit to in helping us with core funding that was enough to support us. It ranged anywhere from \$25,000 to \$35,000. But that core funding really facilitated an incredible amount. For the small amount of seed dollars there is a tremendous opportunity for an incredible amount of work. If government were to fund as a contract it would cost way more, way more.

While FRAP funded the opening of a watershed resources centre, the hiring of a watershed coordinator and some field action, the Roundtable was able to take that money and get a huge return on the original investment.⁴²² The money was used to publicize the field action to potential volunteers, generate interest in restoration activities, apply for youth experience work groups and pay for some of the supplies needed for the restoration work.

This approach has been very effective and field action has been carried out at a very low cost by volunteers from around the watershed, paid youth work groups, school kids and the landowners themselves.⁴²³ Requiring the landowner to contribute at least 25 percent of the restoration costs in cash or in kind, by providing services or equipment to help out with the

⁴¹⁹ Project Interviewee 15, Brighthouse [note 1]; Project Interviewee 17, Wallis [note 11].

⁴²⁰ Salmon River Watershed Roundtable (SRWR), *Vision Statement of the Salmon River Watershed Roundtable, Presentation to the Okanagan-Shuswap Land and Resource Management Plan*, October 17, 1997.

⁴²¹ Project Interviewee 17, Wallis [note 11].

⁴²² Project Interviewee 18, Romaine [note 13]; Project Interviewee 17, Wallis [note 11].

⁴²³ Project Interviewee 17, Wallis [note 11].

restoration activities has also served to stretch the core funding provided by FRAP.⁴²⁴ According to Mike Wallis,

if you include volunteer hours and landowner contributions in terms of machine time, or labour or in some cases some people's cash, one dollar of core funding from FRAP, or any other agency, generates seven additional dollars of investment in the watershed.⁴²⁵

Mike Romaine of DFO was quick to point out, however, that while FRAP may have helped keep the field action in the Salmon River watershed going, the field action itself came from the community, "I don't want to take too much credit for this. The field action was already up and running when we came along. We weren't the spark. We just provided some fuel as they went along."⁴²⁶

By 1998, the SRWR had undertaken restoration activities on over 30 sites comprising over 7 percent of the Salmon River corridor within the Salmon River watershed.⁴²⁷ By 1999, there were 40 sites on the waiting list of landowners who have volunteered for restoration activity after hearing about the Roundtable and observing the restoration activities on other parts of the river.⁴²⁸ Mike Wallis stressed the need to do the work on the sites on the waiting list as soon as possible lest the landowners begin to lose interest and the SRWR loses the momentum it has worked so hard to generate.⁴²⁹ The SRWR plans to continue doing as much field action and restoration work as it can. It is, however, too limited by funding and time constraints to take on more than 10 to 15 restoration projects in a single year.⁴³⁰ By July 1999, it had received additional funding from both DFO and Environment Canada totalling around \$80,000, some of which will be utilized to support its field restoration program.⁴³¹

EDUCATION

The educational aspect of the SRWR is very closely linked to the planning and field action aspects of the SRWR. The SRWR members recognized the importance of educating both themselves and the community on all sorts of issues related to the sustainability of the watershed right from the beginning of the process and established an education committee as part of the SRWR, while it was still the Environment Committee of the District of Salmon Arm. Education has been a component of almost every activity the Environment Committee and the SRWR undertook.

⁴²⁴ Project Interviewee 19, Argent [note 39]; Project Interviewee 17, Wallis [note 11].

⁴²⁵ Project Interviewee 17, Wallis [note 11].

⁴²⁶ Project Interviewee 18, Romaine [note 13].

⁴²⁷ Project Interviewee 19, Argent [note 39]; Project Interviewee 15, Brighthouse [note 1].

⁴²⁸ Project Interviewee 16, Christiensen, [note 35].

⁴²⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴³⁰ Project Interviewee 16, Christiensen, [note 35].

⁴³¹ *Ibid.*

To facilitate SRWR's planning activities, many of the SRWR meetings have focused around learning more about the Salmon River watershed and options for making the human activities in the watershed more sustainable. According to Tom Brighthouse,

About a year to two years ago we would have an expert talk at every meeting or every second meeting. We had talks on the new guidelines on ecological sustainable agriculture, and groundwater and one woman came and showed us her shore plan for the Shuswap arm of the lake near Sorrento, and every bit of the shoreline was producing fish. And every meeting you go to you learn something else because there are government officials there saying we are doing this and that. Each logging company in this area has a five year plan and a couple of months ago we decided, we wanted to see them. So now we have big colourful maps for all the logging companies in the area. So I am tickled pink by what I have learned.⁴³²

The planning sessions themselves also became significant venues for learning. Mike Wallis commented,

Neils has been excellent at the facilitation, but I couldn't understand at one point why he was going through so much repetition. But I eventually realized that there is a very strong value to that and what that amounts to is a process of education. People come to the meetings and there's the new faces and old faces at each meeting. But by going through those planning processes repetitively, this is an education process. This is not just a planning process.⁴³³

The field action has likewise served as an important education opportunity. In engaging in restoration activities on their land, the landowners learned how to be better stewards of their own portion of the watershed. For example, participants in the field activities have had to learn how to plant trees in the proper manner and what species of trees serve as the best bank stabilizers. Mike Wallis indicated that there is significant evidence of this kind of learning:

A really great moment for me in terms of realizing that we are getting through was I was out one day with a rancher and he was talking about trees that we gave him that he planted on his place and he looked at them and a beaver had chewed them up. He walked over there with his cowboy hat on and he leaned down and he picked those trees up and he said Darn it darn it all! And without even thinking about it instead of throwing those cuttings, there were four or five cuttings sitting on the grass, without even thinking he stuck them in the ground instead of throwing them in the river. I thought Bingo - without even thinking he knows now that you can take each one of those cuttings and plant them and you may benefit from the fact the beaver chewed them off and get five trees from one because they will grow from

⁴³² Project Interviewee 15, Brighthouse [note 1].

⁴³³ Project Interviewee 17, Wallis [note 11].

the cuttings for this particular species. He knows that now. And to see someone do that without even thinking about it was really great.⁴³⁴

The SRWR has also endeavoured to include children and youth participants in many aspects of its activities, which has served as a valuable education opportunity. Teachers were contacted and encouraged to bring their classes out to help plant trees along the Salmon River banks at restoration sites.⁴³⁵ The children continue to be involved long after the trees are planted by watering them and monitoring their health and growth.⁴³⁶ In 1997, six high schools in the watershed were given Geographic Information Systems (GIS) computer programs by Environment Canada.⁴³⁷ The GIS programs were to be run on the schools' computers and two teachers at each school were trained by Environment Canada to teach the students how to use them.⁴³⁸ The GIS programs contained base maps of the watershed and all the existing data on the ecological features of the watershed.⁴³⁹ It was Environment Canada's hope that the schools will be provided with monitoring data collected by the SRWR in the future, thereby allowing the students to use the systems to monitor whether the ecosystem goals and objectives for the watershed are being met, which will serve as a valuable learning experience for the students.⁴⁴⁰ For several summers, the SRWR also employed federal government youth experience groups to conduct some of the field action and run the watershed resources center.⁴⁴¹ According to Mah, targeting school children and youth not only provides a vital education for the next generation to live in the watershed, but often also serves to make parents more aware.⁴⁴²

The educational efforts of the SRWR will undoubtedly continue for the duration of the SRWR's operation. The educational component of the SRWR is very closely linked to the planning and field action components of the SRWR. Thus to a large degree continuing the educative component of the SRWR is simply a matter of continuing planning and field action.

Future Activities

In the spring of 1997 the SRWR faced four significant losses. After the indicators workshop, the Environment Canada pilot project ended, thereby eliminating some of the planning funding that the SRWR had relied upon. At the same time, the DFO program that had funded much of the field action also drew to a close. And both Fred Mah, the major proponent of the Roundtable in Environment Canada, and Mike Romaine, the SRWR's key supporter within DFO, retired. Some skeptics suggested that the loss of its two major agency champions would spell the end for

⁴³⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴³⁵ Project Interviewee 20, Mah [note 17].

⁴³⁶ Project Interviewee 17, Wallis [note 11].

⁴³⁷ Project Interviewee 20, Mah [note 17].

⁴³⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴¹ Project Interviewee 17, Wallis [note 11].

⁴⁴² Project Interviewee 20, Mah [note 17].

the SRWR. However, shortly thereafter, the SRWR received funding from Forest Renewal BC (FRBC) to develop a system for monitoring water quality and quantity assessment in the watershed in co-operation with Riverside Forest Products, a local forest company.⁴⁴³ Key participants in the SRWR remained confident that the Roundtable would continue to find funding. Dorothy Argent noted in May 1997,

An organizations is probably pretty fragile until such time it has such a bigness that all of a sudden is there, and so there is a gestation time before it takes on its own life. And I think we have reached that point. There have always been different packets of money that seem to come about for various programs and if you've got your ear to the ground you swing into that. We've now got FRBC, but we've also got Fisheries Renewal BC now. It would be nice to have a little more stability in that end of it. But we have so much momentum now and have gained so much credibility that even though some funding sources have dried up, we still are managing life after FRAP; we have life after FRAP.

We've heard through the rumour mill people saying "Oh gosh they are going to fold up because they don't have funding." That's not the case at all. I mean the amount of work we are doing this year and the one coming up is just absolutely amazing. So in terms of the future, yes I think it is achievable. I have great hope. In fact I believe this is probably in my mind of all the processes I see out there, the only ones that could work at this time.⁴⁴⁴

By July 1999, the SRWR had received new sources of funding from DFO under their "watershed stewardship coordinator programme" and Environment Canada, under their EcoAction 2000 programme that will help provide the necessary guaranteed core dollars for the next few years.⁴⁴⁵ It also had ongoing funding from the forest licensees for the ongoing water quality and quantity monitoring project and funding from the Canada Trust Friends of the Environment Foundation.⁴⁴⁶ With this support, the SRWR was able to maintain its annual budget at over \$300,000. Much of this new funding was specifically earmarked by the funding agencies for field action and education rather than planning. As a result, the actions outlined in the SRWR 1999-2000 Action Plan were more focused on the stream bank restoration work, water quality and quantity monitoring, education and outreach activities and promoting low

⁴⁴³ Project Interviewee 20, Mah [note 17]; Salmon River Watershed Roundtable (SRWR), *Practical Vision of the Salmon River Watershed Roundtable*, no date.

⁴⁴⁴ Project Interviewee 19, Argent [note 39].

⁴⁴⁵ Project Interviewee 16, Christiensen, [note 35]; Project Interviewee 22, Dennis LaPierre, Salmon River Watershed Roundtable Participant, July 1999; Salmon River Watershed Roundtable (SRWR), *SRWR 1999-2000 Action Plan Part 1*, no date; Environment Canada, "Minister Steward Announces \$352,687 in EcoAction 2000 Funding for Environmental Projects in British Columbia," *Backgrounder*, May 11, 1999.

⁴⁴⁶ Canada Trust, "Canada Trust gives out the green: Over three million dollars provided to environmental projects over past year," *Press Release*, March 10, 1999, www.fef.ca/pressreleases.htm; SRWR, *SRWR 1999-2000* [note 73].

impact tourism in the watershed, than on planning.⁴⁴⁷ Nevertheless, the SRWR planned to continue participating in outside planning processes, including the Okanagan-Shuswap Land and Resource Management Planning (OSLRMP) process.⁴⁴⁸

Effectiveness

The SRWR has effectively incorporated many principles of sustainability into its approaches to planning and field action. The SRWR clearly understands the importance of taking a holistic ecosystem planning approach recognizing that everything is connected to everything else. The SRWR *Planning Guide* reads as follows:

In the ecosystem approach each and every living and non-living entity in the watershed (including humans) is viewed as a complex (eco)system in which everything is interdependent with everything else. Thus any change of any sort anywhere in the ecosystem will produce changes which expand throughout the watershed like ripples on a pond into which a pebble is dropped.⁴⁴⁹

The SRWR *Planning Guide* also stressed the importance of planning on the basis of ecosystem boundaries, rather than administrative boundaries:

It became clear that since all the issues involve water, and since water runs downhill, the issues could be resolved only by considering the watershed as a whole.⁴⁵⁰

As a result, ecosystem planning is one of the key principles in the SRWR *Planning Guide* and the SRWR has made great efforts to consider the environment as a complex array of interlocking, interacting systems across the whole watershed in its planning and field action initiatives.⁴⁵¹ As part of its efforts to create a watershed plan that takes a holistic ecosystem approach, the SRWR has taken steps ensure that it knows as much about the watershed as possible. For example, it has gathered all of the existing information on the watershed, developed ecosystem goals, objectives and indicators, and acquired FRBC funding to do an ecological inventory of the watershed.⁴⁵²

The SRWR has also made efforts to contact agencies and organizations in the areas beyond their watershed borders to coordinate planning efforts and take an ecosystem approach to planning. It has participated in regional government planning processes, such as the OSLRMP process, and has endeavored to establish connections with other non-governmental

⁴⁴⁷ SRWR, *SRWR 1999-2000* [note 73].

⁴⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴⁹ Salmon River Watershed Roundtable (SRWR), *The Salmon River Watershed Planning Guide* (Salmon Arm: Salmon River Watershed Roundtable, October 13, 1994), p. 3.

⁴⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

⁴⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵² Project Interviewee 16, Christensen, [note 1]; Project Interviewee 20, Mah [note 17].

organizations in adjacent watersheds that border theirs through efforts such as the BC Watershed Stewardship Alliance. The OSLRMP process has involved some difficulties because LRMP planning boundaries are based on forest district administrative boundaries, and the Salmon River Watershed is divided over two LRMP sub-regions (the Okanagan-Shuswap LRMP and the Kamloops LRMP). The SRWR has repeatedly stated that planning should be based on ecosystem boundaries and that their watershed should be treated as a single planning unit.⁴⁵³ It has not been successful in changing the overall planning boundaries utilized by government agencies in the LRMP processes. However the SRWR has raised the profile of ecosystem-based planning in the region and has caused the LRMP processes to consider its watershed as more of a single unit by having some decisions in its watershed in the Kamloops LRMP delayed until decisions in the adjacent parts of its watershed that fall in the Okanagan-Shuswap LRMP are made.

In its field action, the SRWR has been less successful in taking an ecosystem approach as it has, up to this point, focused primarily on private land around the Salmon River itself, rather than the whole watershed.⁴⁵⁴ This is in part because the SRWR has yet to achieve much influence on the crown land portions of the watershed, which are controlled by provincial government agencies. Nevertheless, in 1997 it indicated that it was trying to initiate some field action on crown land.⁴⁵⁵

Likewise, the SRWR seems to recognize the importance of "keeping all the pieces" and respecting the natural structure and functioning of ecosystems, as well as restoring or rehabilitating what has already been lost. The SRWR has always emphasized both prevention and rehabilitation of ecological damage to the watershed in its planning documents.⁴⁵⁶ The SRWR's commitment to rehabilitation is clearly highlighted in its ongoing restoration efforts and the prominence that restoration work has in its annual action plans. Although it is not as clearly stated, many of the components of the SRWR's *Practical Vision*, such as "stable high quality water supply," "healthy well managed forests," "improved salmon returns," and "protection of wildlife,"⁴⁵⁷ would seem to imply the need for some sort of preventative measures to change the way in which human activities are carried out in the watershed by government agencies, residents and businesses. The *SRWR Planning Guide* also suggests a preventive approach stating that ecosystem indicators need to be monitored over time so that "unplanned and undesired consequences can (hopefully) be identified and corrected before they pass irreversible thresholds."⁴⁵⁸ This also highlights that the SRWR recognizes the importance of

⁴⁵³ SRWR, *Vision Statement* [note 48].

⁴⁵⁴ Project Interviewee 17, Wallis [note 11].

⁴⁵⁵ SRWR, *Vision Statement* [note 48].

⁴⁵⁶ SRWR, *Practical Vision* [note 71]; SRWR, *The Salmon River* [note 77]; Salmon River Watershed Roundtable (SRWR), *Salmon River Restoration Project: History, Mission, Goals and Issues*, no date.

⁴⁵⁷ SRWR, *Practical Vision* [note 71].

⁴⁵⁸ SRWR, *The Salmon River* [note 77], p. 3.

monitoring because plans will always be based on “extremely incomplete knowledge of the effects of any action will have on an ecosystem as large and complex as a watershed.”⁴⁵⁹

Translating its plans into action, the SRWR has made great achievements in restoration along the Salmon River through field action efforts in stream bank erosion control, tree planting, waterfowl habitat improvement and fish weir construction.⁴⁶⁰ Also, by conducting a watershed inventory and establishing ecosystem goals, objectives and indicators, that can be monitored, the SRWR has also by initiated a process to identify undesired watershed consequences and has thereby promoted the preventive approach. However, this appears to be still in the early stages. Actually taking action to prevent these consequences is problematic for the SRWR. When asked if the SRWR’s planning efforts have resulted in any sort of preventative activities, key members of the SRWR had few concrete success stories to offer. This is in part because of SRWR’s lack of authority over any actions on Crown or private land in the watershed and the range of potential difficulties it faces in trying to influence the actions of those individuals, businesses and agencies that do have authority on Crown and private land. This will be discussed further below.

The SRWR has repeatedly emphasized the importance of giving ecological, social and economic concerns equal consideration. For example, the *Planning Guide* states,

most if not all, watershed issues have economic, social and environmental aspects and the resolution of the issues must deal simultaneously with all these aspects. Consequently, the Roundtable has, from the beginning, defined the health of the watershed (as in its mission statement) as a combination of social, environmental and economic health.⁴⁶¹

But while the SRWR places equal emphasis on the importance of ecological, social and economic concerns in its planning documents, its focus in terms of action has tended to be more ecological. Even though one of the key principles of the SRWR is sustainable living which emphasizes the unsustainable nature of current lifestyles and the need to live within the capacity of the watershed to provide resources,⁴⁶² it does not yet appear to have addressed issues of social justice and the sustainability of current lifestyles and economic practices significantly.

This may be due in part to the SRWR’s implicit policy of not pointing fingers or assigning blame to avoid alienating any of its members. It may also be due the Roundtable’s recognition that most members of the watershed are not ready to deal with the relationship between issues of social justice, economic activities and sustainability. As Mike Romaine suggested:

⁴⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

⁴⁶⁰ Project Interviewee 17, Wallis [note 11]; Project Interviewee 19, Argent [note 39]; SRWR, *Salmon River Restoration Project* [note 84].

⁴⁶¹ SRWR, *The Salmon River* [note 77], p. 6.

⁴⁶² *Ibid.*

Watershed groups can only move as fast as the attitudes in their region. So there has been a great deal of support for stream bank restoration because they see the benefits from it. But the Salmon River is not politically and sociologically ready to recognize the need for changes such as establishing local cooperatives and economies, just like many other watersheds right now don't realize they need to clean up their ponds and streams.⁴⁶³

Moreover, the SRWR recognizes the magnitude of the task of creating an ecologically, economically and socially sustainable watershed,

To create a watershed that is sustainable socially, environmentally and economically requires thoughtful consideration of a multitude of values and other relationships that tie the watershed into an ecosystem. This is no small task. The goal is to carry out the task as well as possible and to get better at it as time goes on.⁴⁶⁴

Thus although the SRWR has fallen short on promoting social and economic sustainability, it may be unfair to expect it to have achieved such a goal in such a short period of time.

Creating an adaptable initiative that can adjust to sudden changes in the ecological, social or economic situation is also central to effectiveness. The SRWR has always stressed the importance of having a "living" plan and has been engaged in a process of pulling pieces of a watershed plan together since its inception in 1991.⁴⁶⁵ Because it is always being added to and revised, the SRWR's integrated watershed plan likely will be able to adapt to changes in the ecological, social or economic situation. Mike Romaine suggested that the SRWR was really developing a process,

What you are after here is a process, a long-term process to build a way of moving towards sustainability. It has to be a series of plans and not one. So if you take the overall vision for the watershed which is we want – a clean environment for our future generations, that is the vision – then I think you have to break that down and plan as you go for every aspect of the watershed.⁴⁶⁶

The SRWR is certainly intending to develop a plan that is adaptable and only time will tell if it succeeds.

Ensuring that initiatives are implemented, given existing resources and political will, is a critical component of effectiveness and is one of the key difficulties that the SRWR faces, due to the fact that it is a community based organization with no authority over either Crown or private land. The SRWR recognizes this difficulty and believes that the implementation of their

⁴⁶³ Project Interviewee 18, Romaine [note 13].

⁴⁶⁴ SRWR, *Salmon River* [note 14].

⁴⁶⁵ Project Interviewee 16, Christiensen [note 1].

⁴⁶⁶ Project Interviewee 18, Romaine [note 13].

goals will come through the participation and “buy-in” of individuals from agencies and landowners who do have planning authority over the watershed, who will then take the SRWR goals back to their various agencies or private land and incorporate them into their own decision making.⁴⁶⁷ The *SRWR Planning Guide* notes,

The watershed plan will be useful only to the extent it helpfully guides the activities of individuals and organizations (public and private) operating within the watershed. All of these plan either formally or informally. Therefore, the usefulness of the watershed plan will be in the way it influences individuals and organizations as they formulate and carry out their own plans.⁴⁶⁸

Mike Romaine confirmed that this approach is appropriate for government bodies as well as private landowners:

I think that unless government is an active player and supporter, they cannot do it, because policies have to change and you can't change economic policies unless those agencies involved become basically infected I guess with a different way of doing business.⁴⁶⁹

The SRWR also recognized the importance of participation and buy-in of the general public in achieving SRWR goals. Members of the public are necessary to serve as a critical mass to call for politicians or agencies to change the way activities are carried out in the watershed and are needed to support changes in the way activities are carried out. As Fred Mah observed, the public is a central component of implementation,

If the people are not with you, it does not matter what decisions are made, it is not going to go over too well. How many inspectors can we have at the same time that the government is cutting back? If the people, the farmers, the ranchers and the loggers are not aware of what is happening, nothing is going to work.⁴⁷⁰

To gain this participation and buy-in, the SRWR has been extremely inclusive in its planning approaches and makes most of its decisions by consensus. It has invited and achieved the participation of the majority of municipal, regional, provincial and federal government agencies that manage the natural resources in the watershed. It has managed to attract several landowners and some key corporations, such as Riverside Forest Products. It has also welcomed any interested community member and makes concerted efforts to contact as many people in the watershed as possible, especially private landowners, to inform them of their planning activities through newspaper articles, contact with school teachers, and community surveys, mail-outs and meetings.

⁴⁶⁷ SRWR, *The Salmon River* [note 77].

⁴⁶⁸ SRWR, *The Salmon River* [note 77], p. 3.

⁴⁶⁹ Project Interviewee 18, Romaine [note 13].

⁴⁷⁰ Project Interviewee 20, Mah [note 17].

Because the SRWR has only attracted 150 to 200 people to its meetings over the last six years, it cannot claim to be operating with the full participation and agreement of the general public. However, the SRWR has opened its doors to whoever wishes to participate and feels that it has the support of many members of the general public, even if those people do not attend SRWR meetings. As Tom Brighthouse observed,

When we first started there was a lot of suspicion on the part of the community. But six years later, [it is different] partly because we have gone so slowly, partly because there have been neighbourhood meetings and they have been a key. One whole summer we had a monthly meeting in different parts of the watershed and they weren't widely attended. But overall they had the effect that a lot more people knew about them because they were invited to them. Even if you don't go to the meeting you know something is happening. So overall if you could say six years ago those who had heard about it were 60 percent suspicious and now a lot more people have heard about it and even if 60 percent are still suspicious there is still a huge 40 percent who are supportive. We don't know the exact numbers. But the fact that so many people are phoning now and saying please help us combat erosion on the banks is a big indicator.⁴⁷¹

Gaining the full agreement and trust of the residents of the watershed could take a long time. Mike Romaine observed,

it takes a long time to commit a watershed. There are many surveys out there. Some people are critical of the SRWR. Some people are quite committed to it. It has got a nice clean track record and I would say that those that are aware of it or know it, do trust it.⁴⁷²

The SRWR has had more limited success in actually translating the participation they have achieved into changes in activities in the watershed,. It has had some success in getting some landowners to change their management practices on their own land. However, the SRWR has not convinced any of the government agencies or corporations to make substantial changes to any of their activities, policies or management practices on Crown or private land. In its 1999 review of its long-term goals, the SRWR acknowledged that it was having difficulty getting the government to implement regulatory and legislative changes recommended by the SRWR.⁴⁷³

The SRWR noted in its 1999 Review that perhaps its initial hopes of persuading government agencies to recognize the SRWR formally and ultimately to make regulatory and legislative changes based on the SRWR's advice were unrealistic, and that the progress it has made in

⁴⁷¹ Project Interviewee 15, Brighthouse [note 1].

⁴⁷² Project Interviewee 18, Romaine [note 13].

⁴⁷³ Salmon River Watershed Roundtable (SRWR), "Appendix II, 1999 Review of Short- and Long-Term Goals," *Salmon River Watershed Roundtable Management Model – Draft 1*, July 1, 1999.

establishing relationships with government agencies has been sufficient progress for now.⁴⁷⁴ Some SRWR members also indicated that the initiatives' limited impact on the way things are done in the watershed results in part from its unwillingness to push hard for such changes due to its desire to maintain an amicable working relationship with the various agencies and corporations.⁴⁷⁵ According to Neils Christensen, "government agencies haven't done what we have asked because we haven't actually done that. We haven't tried that."⁴⁷⁶

This failure to push hard for changes is in part linked to the SRWR's implicit policy of not pointing fingers at anyone for their actions, including the agencies, corporations, ranchers and other landowners who participate in the SRWR. Tom Brighthouse observed, "we have always backed away from pointing the finger at forestry or agriculture or other human activities."⁴⁷⁷ This approach is reflective of SRWR's mission statement, which advocates "positive, cooperative action." This policy respects the practical reality that to operate, the SRWR requires the continued goodwill and partnership of the individuals, agencies and corporations that provide them with funding and support. Pushing for changes in the activities of these individuals, agencies and corporations in the watershed might alienate them to the point that they would cease to support the SRWR. Mike Wallis observed,

Everybody wants to restore the river. But... we have not in any way dictated, nor would we dictate to Riverside [Forest Products] how they should run their business. That would be friction in a good partnership.⁴⁷⁸

Moreover, some of the individuals, agencies and corporations that would be targets of pressures for change are part of the SRWR and therefore participate in the SRWR's consensus-based decision-making and unlikely to support such action. It is also possible that the SRWR does not feel it has gathered enough information or examined the issues sufficiently yet to know what specific changes are necessary to achieve their vision of a socially, ecologically and economically sustainable watershed.

While the SRWR hesitancy to push for major changes in activities in the watershed could be construed as a failure, pushing for changes may have achieved little anyway. As Mike Romaine pointed out, governments are slow to change,

I think that at the grass roots level there are people in government that have truly bought into it [the SRWR], but they have not been able to influence people above them, or haven't tried. I am not sure which. There are very few mechanisms for change. Departments and ministries are so rigidly structured. It is very difficult for you to take a new idea and move it across all the

⁴⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷⁵ Project Interviewee 19, Argent [note 39]; Project Interviewee 16, Christensen, [note 1]; Project Interviewee 18, Romaine [note 13].

⁴⁷⁶ Project Interviewee 16, Christensen [note 1].

⁴⁷⁷ Project Interviewee 15, Brighthouse [note 1].

⁴⁷⁸ Project Interviewee 17, Wallis [note 11].

different boxes that are required to be integrated and that is really the issue. So even if you have a very sympathetic boss at a high level such as a deputy minister, he is confined to a box here. And everyone else has priorities and with down sizing is has become more and more difficult because everybody has very valid other priorities and work loads.⁴⁷⁹

Mike Romaine noted that getting active support from government agencies is particularly difficult in the case of agencies that don't need community groups like the SRWR to deliver their mandate:

Agencies that have responsibilities and a strong mandate, like Fisheries and Oceans, and Ministry of Forests don't have to participate. They have all the power so why begin to devolve it? It is those agencies with the soft mandates, like Environment Canada, maybe Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks more so. They have to use these community groups to gain power. Even now if you look at the groups who are most supportive, Environment Canada is probably the most committed because they do not have the power to deliver their mandate in any other way. But Fisheries and Oceans can say, "it is our way or the highway."⁴⁸⁰

Similarly, Mike Wallis noted that it would be difficult to get a corporation like Riverside Forest Products to change its harvesting activities in the watershed, "if we were to say to Riverside, we want you to reduce your AAC [annual allowable cut] in this watershed, they would say, 'hold it, with all due respect, we are here to run a business and we can't agree to that' ..."⁴⁸¹ Thus, pushing for change may have accomplished little anyway, at the cost of alienating the "grass roots" government people, agencies and corporations that could turn out to be the SRWR's greatest allies.

In the long run, the SRWR's method of achieving changes in a more subtle, non-finger pointing way through partnerships and education may be more effective. For one thing, the SRWR has achieved buy-in from many individuals, businesses and agencies that very few sustainability-oriented community organizations attain. Riverside, a major forest company, has participated in the SRWR for three years, shares information with the Roundtable and partnered with the Roundtable on the FRBC inventory project, which was a key reason why the Roundtable received the FRBC funding.⁴⁸²

Many ranchers, who are a notoriously independent lot, often with little use for environmental regulations, are now in support of the Roundtable. Mike Wallis observed,

We have had lots of landowners that were very skeptical - basically "get off my land." There still are some. But there are examples in the short five year history of the

⁴⁷⁹ Project Interviewee 18, Romaine [note 13].

⁴⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸¹ Project Interviewee 17, Wallis [note 11].

⁴⁸² Project Interviewee 17, Wallis [note 11].

Roundtable of get off my landers that have come around. One of the toughest nuts to crack has now approached us to see if we can do something with his property. He was kicking dirt around with his cowboy boots and saying “I kind of like what you’ve done on the neighbour’s place and it’s looking pretty darn good and what do you say why don’t you take a look at my place next year cause I’m losing a lot of land down there and I don’t want that to happen anymore.” That’s the exact opposite from what we heard from him four years ago.⁴⁸³

Tom Brighthouse credits the SRWR’s policy of not pointing fingers, at least in part for this turn around on the part of the ranchers:

I’m sure at first they just thought oh it is going to be a Roundtable that blames the farmers for polluting the water. And to a certain extent they do it. But one of the successes, and Dorothy should be knighted for this, is that we’ve kept backing away from blaming anybody.⁴⁸⁴

Part of this buy-in also lies in the SRWR’s ability to seem like it was genuinely able to respond to people’s problems. As Mike Romaine observed,

A lot of people came to the SRWR because they had a problem and part of the success of the SRWR lies in the fact that they have taken a masterful approach with people like Dorothy to hear somebody’s concerns and then be able to respond fast enough.⁴⁸⁵

Members of the SRWR also see a growing sense of environmental stewardship among people in the watershed as a result of SRWR efforts and hope that this will facilitate future change in the watershed. The SRWR’s focus on education and restoration work and its targeting of school children have been geared around developing this kind of sense of stewardship. The restoration activities of the SRWR have been critical in fostering a sense of stewardship in the individuals that have participated in them. The SRWR has ensured that many of the groups that have conducted field action, such as tree planting, go back and check on their work. Mike Wallis observed that in many cases the sense of stewardship that these individuals are developing becomes apparent when they observe that something has happened to the trees that they have planted. Wallis noted “they come back and say something has happened to my tree and ‘my’ tree is the ownership thing, which is very important because that is where you get the commitment,” and they are very anxious to do something to repair the damage.⁴⁸⁶

The planning process of the SRWR has also fostered a sense of stewardship in some people. According to Dorothy Argent,

⁴⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸⁴ Project Interviewee 15, Brighthouse [note 1].

⁴⁸⁵ Project Interviewee 18, Romaine [note 13].

⁴⁸⁶ Project Interviewee 17, Wallis [note 11].

When I was a councilor with the District of Salmon Arm, I was very conscientious about planning holistically. But it wasn't until I got involved in this process that I realized that we weren't planning sustainably and it changed me in my outlook in a way that I have been committed ever since to supporting this transition to planning sustainably because we have to.⁴⁸⁷

Mike Wallis suggested that the SRWR has not so much created a sense of stewardship in some people, but rather allowed some people to express a sense of stewardship that they already had by removing the constraints associated with undertaking stewardship activities:

I don't know whether in the five year cycle of the SRWR whether there has been any significant change in environmental consciousness. There are hardly any landowners out there who don't love their land. They all do. They live there for a reason and they are not out there to ruin the river. What I think it is, is most people already feel that way and they are constrained by a number of things and whatever those constraints are, if you can push the limiting button and bingo they pop up and do what is right because they want to and are able to. Now what is holding a lot of people up is money and technical expertise and government bureaucracy. Now we [the SRWR] can get core dollars and multiply them out. We can get trees and we can get volunteer labour. We can also take care of government bureaucracy and procure agency expertise. The landowners climb off the fence one after another when you give them that.⁴⁸⁸

The degree to which the SRWR has been able to foster a sense of stewardship is difficult to determine. There are certainly cases where the SRWR has not been successful in fostering this type of stewardship. Dorothy Argent observed, "sometimes we have planted trees and the landowner hasn't cared less and we've gone back and they haven't helped any or they still let their cattle down there."⁴⁸⁹ Mike Romaine and Mike Wallis both observed that it is very difficult to tell whether landowners support the SRWR because they have developed a sense of stewardship or because of the personal gain associated with having their land restored.⁴⁹⁰ Both Romaine and Wallis felt that it was likely a bit of both. Romaine observed,

I think a lot of people have a sense that something is wrong and this just feels right that you are doing something. People will buy-in if they are heard and listened to and respected and I think there are a lot of people in the Salmon River watershed that have. Some of them have their own vested interests, others are truly altruistic in their desire for their community and I think you find that in all groups.⁴⁹¹

⁴⁸⁷ Project Interviewee 19, Argent [note 39].

⁴⁸⁸ Project Interviewee 17, Wallis [note 11].

⁴⁸⁹ Project Interviewee 19, Argent [note 39].

⁴⁹⁰ Project Interviewee 18, Romaine [note 13]; Project Interviewee 17, Wallis [note 11].

⁴⁹¹ Project Interviewee 18, Romaine [note 13].

Key members of the SRWR also felt that SRWR's positive, cooperative approach was beginning to result in change in government agencies – slowly but surely. Mike Romaine noted,

It takes a while for new thoughts or tools to be implemented, like new technology. But I think it will happen and I think the time is just about right. But it takes some time for that stuff to kind of work its way through the system. And the more stuff that comes out that talks about how wonderful Salmon River watershed has been, the more that people say about it, the more that change will occur. And you can see the signs. And I think there has already been significant change over time.⁴⁹²

Dorothy Argent echoed this sentiment:

I look for people that really do believe in the potential and that we then continue to work together to make meaningful change in how we do business and that's happening. It's slow. Sometimes when you look at today and you think oh my gosh. But then you look at the way things were ten years ago, or even five years ago and we are really making progress.⁴⁹³

Dorothy Argent, Neils Christensen and Mike Wallis indicated that they see these changes in little ways, such as government officials sending other concerned citizens in the watershed to the SRWR first to try and have their concerns dealt with there and government agencies managing to get trees to the SRWR to plant, even if it is through the back door.⁴⁹⁴

It is possible that the changes that SRWR members are witnessing in landowners and government agencies are at the moment only superficial. For example, perhaps some supporters of the SRWR, such as the landowners, are merely participating out of self-interest to save their land. The SRWR noticed a marked increase in calls from landowners wanting some work done on their land in 1997 when it appeared that flooding was likely.⁴⁹⁵ It is possible that if the SRWR starts discussing difficult issues, such as changing the way in which activities, such as ranching or logging, are carried out in the watershed, which it may eventually need to do if it wants to be successful in implementing its vision, support for the SRWR among groups such as the ranchers and loggers might start to wane. Mike Romaine observed:

The table has been very successful in having no conflicts yet within it, but then they have not dealt with main issues like water. I think they have laid the foundation to discuss these things, but it would be really interesting to test it.⁴⁹⁶

⁴⁹² *Ibid.*

⁴⁹³ Project Interviewee 19, Argent [note 39].

⁴⁹⁴ Project Interviewee 19, Argent [note 39]; Project Interviewee 16, Christensen, [note 1]; Project Interviewee 17, Wallis [note 11].

⁴⁹⁵ Project Interviewee 15, Brighthouse [note 1].

⁴⁹⁶ Project Interviewee 18, Romaine [note 13].

Likewise, the SRWR has strongly advocated greater use of participative institutions and practices for policy making in its planning documents and interactions with various government agencies.⁴⁹⁷ However, former government agency participants in the SRWR observed that while the “grass roots government people,” such as themselves, that participated in the SRWR meetings may have changed their outlooks regarding the need for public participation as a result of the SRWR, they doubted that the agencies that they were part of changed much.⁴⁹⁸

Nevertheless, the SRWR is hopeful that government agencies may be realizing that they cannot fulfill their mandates without the help of groups like the SRWR. As Neils Christensen observed,

A fellow who is fairly high up in DFO said to me DFO has got one of the strongest laws in the country and he says we can't use it. I mean they do use it all the time, but it is not adequate because if we take that regulatory approach then we have got to have more fisheries officers than we could ever possibly have and we have got to have more lawyers than we could possibly have and he says and it is just not the way. So when you have a situation that involves a lot of people and is very complex, where everybody has the possibility of either helping devise and implement the plan or of obstructing the plan, then consensus is the way to go.⁴⁹⁹

Mike Romaine likewise commented, “if government hasn't been able to pull it [land and resource management] off by now, it can't. So that is why it has to go to these public groups.”⁵⁰⁰

Even with government agencies, corporations and individuals participating in the SRWR beginning to change, the process remains very slow. It will likely be a long time before the vision of the SRWR really starts to be adopted in practical government action throughout the watershed, if it ever is. Moreover, achieving full implementation of the SRWR's vision will likely also require changes in the citizens and corporations of the watershed that are not part of the SRWR. Thus it is still likely a long road ahead. Nevertheless, Neils Christensen pointed out, moving to more participative institutions and practices, whereby groups like the SRWR play a role in determining public policy, is part of an evolutionary process in which “the SRWR is contributing to the change, but we are also a reflection of the fact that that change has to some degree already occurred.”⁵⁰¹ The SRWR also hopes that there are ways to speed this process of change along. Mike Romaine, Fred Mah and Dorothy Argent all stressed the importance of the newly forming BC Watershed Stewardship Alliance as a means of giving watershed groups

⁴⁹⁷ SRWR, *Practical Vision* [note 71]; SRWR, *The Salmon River* [note 77].

⁴⁹⁸ Project Interviewee 20, Mah [note 17]; Project Interviewee 18, Romaine [note 13].

⁴⁹⁹ Project Interviewee 16, Christensen [note 1].

⁵⁰⁰ Project Interviewee 18, Romaine [note 13].

⁵⁰¹ Project Interviewee 16, Christensen [note 1].

enough political clout to begin to force policy changes.⁵⁰² Dorothy Argent remains confident about the future of the SRWR and about achieving the SRWR's vision in the watershed:

The level of understanding is to a point where we are kind of at a critical turning point, where I see great willingness. Sure there's still a lot of rigidity and some people are still in such a conventional way of doing business that they don't see the opportunity. I literally think that they just don't see it. But there's enough that do. I find a whole network, within industry, within government, within community, within landowners that there's enough of us willing to work together that we can make a difference I think we will just absorb the ones who are sitting on the sidelines thinking they will never make it or here's a shotgun on my property, stay off.⁵⁰³

The vision of the SRWR may never be fully implemented. Nevertheless, the SRWR has clearly been an effective initiative. Through its field action and education and outreach activities, the SRWR has implemented at least part of its vision and has had an impact on the ecology and people of the watershed that many government initiatives have never had. Through its planning activities, it has built trust and relationships among watershed citizens, government agencies and corporations and has brought them together to discuss sustainability. As Mike Romaine noted, even in the absence of the field action initiatives, the SRWR can still be considered a success,

The real benefits are the process that has been built for planning and communication built trust and co-operation, taking on roles and providing a forum for the integration of those agencies and that to me is where the success has been in terms of laying the foundation for the watershed management plan. Now you could say, "What good has the SRWR actually done?" Tell me how many fish it has actually brought back. And those are hard, hard questions. You have to do it more on a philosophy of faith that this is a better way of doing it. It is going a new direction.⁵⁰⁴

Efficiency

A key aspect of efficiency is completing decision making and implementation in a reasonable time frame. The SRWR is taking a long time to produce its complete Integrated Watershed Plan. The SRWR has been operating for six years and it is still at the stage of conducting ecological inventories of the watershed.⁵⁰⁵ Speed in decision making is often regarded as desirable. Conventional assessments of efficiency might suggest that the SRWR is an inefficient process. But perhaps much poor planning can be attributed to trying to meet unrealistic deadlines. To be efficient, the decision that is made, or the plan that is produced,

⁵⁰² Project Interviewee 19, Argent [note 39]; Project Interviewee 20, Mah [note 17]; Project Interviewee 18, Romaine [note 13].

⁵⁰³ Project Interviewee 19, Argent [note 39].

⁵⁰⁴ Project Interviewee 18, Romaine [note 13].

⁵⁰⁵ Project Interviewee 16, Christensen [note 1].

must have been developed with sufficient information, buy-in and vision to be effective for as long a period as possible. Integrated planning for a watershed is highly complex, particularly if one wants to produce a plan that reflects all of the principles of effectiveness outlined in the earlier section of this paper. Gathering the necessary data, identifying all the stakeholders, developing a decision-making process, making appropriate decisions and implementing those decisions all takes a large amount of time. As Mike Wallis observed, “it has taken 100 years to create these problems. They can’t be fixed in a four year political cycle.”⁵⁰⁶

Even if all the data needed were available, which is invariably not the case, getting all or even some of the stakeholders to agree on a normative vision of the watershed in twenty years, and on what needs to be done to achieve that vision, is a painstaking process. Mike Wallis noted,

You have to give people time to get used to what you are doing. You gotta allow people time to change their minds. You can’t say here is all this information, this is how it is, now make a consensus decision, we gotta get out next week and do something.⁵⁰⁷

If attaining ecological, social and economic sustainability is the goal, it is not enough just to develop and implement a plan. Significant changes in attitudes and behaviour on the part of the individuals, agencies and corporations operating in the watershed will be necessary, and those changes will likely have to be accomplished through years of discussion and education. Thus an efficient process would be one that delivers these types of changes in addition to a plan in as short a time period as possible, recognizing that these types of changes take a long period of time. Mike Romaine said,

I use the analogy of an onion with all of its layers. If you look at the 100s of years of activity in that watershed, we have laid down layers of land use activity and attitudes over 100 years. If you want to change that you have to roll all those things back and it will take you years and years. You can’t just cut through the onion with a plan. And much of that is education and understanding. So what I think is that this is a long-term process. Some people come in with some quick solutions, just legislate the whole god-damn thing, legislate ground water, put a license fee on land owners, put meters on their pipes so they manage their water better. And I think that unless you take a really hard nosed approach in legislation then you have to do it through attitude change and education and getting people back to what they are doing before cooperatives for irrigation systems and so forth and that to me seems to be the way you are going to get the best product. And that is what the SRWR does. I think it is slowly taking the layers off on understanding.⁵⁰⁸

⁵⁰⁶ Project Interviewee 17, Wallis [note 11].

⁵⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰⁸ Project Interviewee 18, Romaine [note 13].

Based on the initial results that people involved in the SRWR have demonstrated and have observed in others, it seems possible that initiatives such as SRWR can begin to foster these changes in attitudes and behaviour.

In addition, the SRWR has been active beyond its planning processes. Over the last six years the SRWR has successfully established partnerships with government agencies, landowners and corporations throughout the watershed, raised significant funding, created a vision for the watershed and a strategic plan, developed and implemented several annual work plans each year, carried out a significant amount of restoration work, participated in regional planning processes, and set ecosystem goals, objectives and indicators for the watershed.

Efficiency also involves ensuring that the economic costs of decision making and implementation are reasonable given the benefits that will ensue. The SRWR has also been fairly cost effective. Operating on an annual budget of about \$300,000 per year,⁵⁰⁹ the SRWR has been able to accomplish many significant things in planning, field action and education. Each year the SRWR has been able to multiply its annual budget, which it refers to as core dollars, by seven fold in its restoration work through volunteer hours, and in-kind and cash donations. Mike Wallis stated, “we have calculated it out and we are getting a seven dollar value for each dollar invested in core funding, and that is a good investment as far as we are concerned.”⁵¹⁰ The core dollars are utilized to pay for the watershed coordinator’s half time position, keeping the Salmon River Watershed Resources Centre open, photocopying, phoning and advertising. Moreover, as Mike Romaine noted, the seven dollar investment in restoration for each dollar of core funding is not the only return the core funding generates, “I don’t know how you measure the dollar value return on things like attitude change, education, support, trust and all those things.”⁵¹¹

Compared to government planning processes, the SRWR is operating on an extremely small budget, given the benefits it has produced. As Dorothy Argent said, “if the government were to fund this as a contract it would cost way more, way more.”⁵¹² The efficiencies offered by the SRWR could be particularly important in our current period of budget cuts where many agencies are finding that they simply do not have the resources to deliver their mandates. Neils Christensen noted,

It seems to me is that with downsizing, with lower budgets and so on, even to a greater degree than before, the agencies are going to have to find new ways of doing business. And one of the ways of doing business and doing it effectively is by forming partnership with the people.⁵¹³

⁵⁰⁹ Project Interviewee 16, Christensen, January, 1998.

⁵¹⁰ Project Interviewee 17, Wallis [note 11].

⁵¹¹ Project Interviewee 18, Romaine [note 13].

⁵¹² Project Interviewee 19, Argent [note 39].

⁵¹³ Project Interviewee 16, Christensen [note 1].

Moreover, the cost of maintaining a process such as the SRWR may be minimal compared to the costs of remedying the damage that may result if a process such as the SRWR is not in place. According to Dorothy Argent,

We have to have the long term vision and putting dollars now into this work is going to save us a tremendous amount of dollars in the future and we need to be able to sell to government how well this is working and that the costs today are very minimal compared to the costs of remedying the damage in the future.⁵¹⁴

Another key component of efficiency is basing decisions on a full cost accounting of the ecological, social and economic costs and benefits of an activity, including oft ignored future costs and benefits and externalities, such as cumulative and indirect effects. The SRWR appears to consider many of these costs in its decision making. Key participants in the SRWR continually emphasize the long-term costs of not undertaking preventative and restorative actions now.⁵¹⁵ The SRWR does not yet appear to have developed measures to deal with the full cost of current lifestyles and economic activities in the watershed. However, the SRWR does recognize that externalities exist, and calls for “polluter pay clean-up” in its “Practical Vision.”⁵¹⁶ It likewise recognizes that current lifestyles do have an ecological cost. The SRWR *Planning Guide* states:

It has been estimated that for the entire population of the world to consume resources at the same per capita rate as in Canada would require a resource base equivalent to three planets.⁵¹⁷

In its holistic, ecosystem based approach to planning, the SRWR has also recognized the complexity of the systems that it is attempting to plan for and is aware of the importance of cumulative and indirect effects, even though it might not be directly addressing them at this time.

The SRWR has been very efficient at coordinating the efforts of many of the relevant government and non-government agencies and stakeholders, across as many geographical boundaries. Government and non-government agencies and stakeholders from all over the watershed and on the watershed boundaries participate in the SRWR process. This has resulted in many efficiencies in planning that extend beyond the SRWR itself. As Dorothy Argent observed,

If all players are really at the table, then it has the opportunity to integrate planning and facilitate the integration of resources. The SRWR has generated a lot of enthusiasm and

⁵¹⁴ Project Interviewee 19, Argent [note 39].

⁵¹⁵ Project Interviewee 19, Argent [note 39]; Project Interviewee 16, Christensen, [note 1]; Project Interviewee 18, Romaine [note 13].

⁵¹⁶ SRWR, *Practical Vision* [note 71].

⁵¹⁷ SRWR, *The Salmon River* [note 77], p. 2.

from agencies there is almost a relief, because there is an integration of their research and programs. We just kept hearing, "Oh I didn't realize you were doing that," and "Yes I would like a copy." And we have ended up integrating all the research that has been done in our watershed into a single document.⁵¹⁸

This integration of government and non-government agencies and stakeholders has allowed for efficiencies that has allowed the SRWR to accomplish more in the field on private land than individuals and governments working alone often can. According to Mike Wallis,

Because we have both government agencies and landowners on board, we have been able to accomplish a lot in the field. Governments are working well with us - they see us as being a one stop shopping opportunity. By dealing with us they are dealing with a lot of landowners that they don't have time to deal with individually. We are convenient and we can help them fulfill their mandate, and the landowner sees it as cutting of red tape because we can take care of things such as regulations and technical expertise for them. Everything we have done so far has been focused on private land, which is good because that is the hardest area for agencies to deal with and agencies like FRBC are very impressed with us that we have been able to do so much on private land that they will probably never be able to.⁵¹⁹

While the government and non-government agencies and stakeholders in the Salmon River watershed still have a long way to go before they are efficiently integrated in the management of the watershed, the SRWR has contributed significantly to the development of improved lines of communication and partnerships among many of these agencies and stakeholders. Through its open door policy in which anyone is welcome to participate in the SRWR and its methodical consensus based decision-making process, the SRWR has likely ensured to the best of its ability that as many stakeholders as possible buy-in to the initiative and will not undermine the SRWR. However, it is likely that some agencies and stakeholders will try to undermine the SRWR no matter what the SRWR does, purely because some agencies and stakeholders may have, or may perceive that they have, a vested interest in ensuring that the SRWR is not successful. The SRWR has already experienced efforts by some agencies and stakeholders to stand in their way. According to Fred Mah:

There was a Ministry of Forests representative. The table was so fed up with him, they asked to speak to his supervisor to have him taken off. They basically said if you continue to send him we would prefer to have nobody. He just kept saying that in forestry, we produce a plan, you comment on it and we will take it or leave it and he was not willing to even talk about different approaches.⁵²⁰

⁵¹⁸ Project Interviewee 19, Argent [note 39].

⁵¹⁹ Project Interviewee 17, Wallis [note 11].

⁵²⁰ Project Interviewee 20, Mah [note 17].

Finally, in taking the approach of producing a living plan, the SRWR is in some ways efficient and in some ways inefficient. It is inefficient in the sense that the plan will always be in the process of being redeveloped or replaced. It is efficient in the sense that the whole SRWR process will not have to be conducted over again. It will be an ongoing process of planning. In the long run, producing a living plan may be more efficient. Producing a living plan in small pieces that are developed and altered over many years is less expensive up front in terms of time and money than producing a complete plan in the form of a static document. Many static plans are outdated before they are implemented and will likely have to be altered over the years, or completely redone at significant expense in terms of time and money.

Equity

A key principle of equity is allowing and assisting all stakeholders potentially affected by the initiative to participate fully and meaningfully in any decision making and implementation associated with the initiative. In this regard, the SRWR has been very successful. As noted, previously, the SRWR endeavours to be as inclusive as possible. A key principle of the SRWR is that, “a large proportion of those with a stake in the future of the Salmon River watershed participate in creating its future.”⁵²¹ It also takes the ecosystem approach in defining what its community is and includes in its community anyone who has “a legal mandate for, or legitimate interest in, the well being of the watershed.”⁵²² Thus it includes in its community non-resident landowners, agencies, First Nations, businesses, NGOs, and others.⁵²³

Not only does it include everyone in its decision-making processes who wishes to be included, but it also actively seeks the participation of as many people as possible. To ensure the widest participation as possible, it has sent out invitations, mail-outs and surveys to let individuals, agencies and corporations with an interest in the watershed know about the SRWR and has allowed anyone interested in participating to become a member of the Roundtable. To make the SRWR accessible to as many people as possible, it has held several community open houses in most of the communities in the watershed, so people could attend without having to travel far.⁵²⁴ All of these community open houses, and all SRWR meetings are held in the evening so working people can attend and all of the major SRWR planning sessions have been held on weekends.⁵²⁵ While the SRWR has not been able to provide anyone with funding to attend meetings, it has done its best on a limited budget to ensure that it is accessible to as many interested participants as possible.

A key aspect of the SRWR’s inclusivity is that it includes everyone that wishes to participate in the SRWR in a full and meaningful way. According to the SRWR *Planning Guide*,

⁵²¹ SRWR, *Salmon River* [note 14], p. 2.

⁵²² *Ibid.*, p. 2.

⁵²³ *Ibid.*

⁵²⁴ Project Interviewee 15, Brighthouse [note 1].

⁵²⁵ Project Interviewee 15, Brighthouse [note 1]; Project Interviewee 20, Mah [note 17].

The goal is to give those stakeholders who wish to participate an active and effective role as partners in the creation of the plan in a way that leads to consensus.⁵²⁶

To allow everyone to participate fully and actively as partners, the SRWR adopted a consensus-based approach to decision making right from the beginning.⁵²⁷ In operating by consensus, the SRWR allows all participants' voices to be heard. The SRWR has made a concerted effort to develop a "slow, methodical"⁵²⁸ system of consensus-based decision making that deals with issues of trust, language and fear, and genuinely allows everyone at the table to participate fully.⁵²⁹ While some of the planning initiatives undertaken by the SRWR, such as the development of the ecosystem goals, objectives and indicators with Environment Canada, may have been too rushed to employ this system of consensus based decision making, most of the SRWR's planning has been conducted based on the full participation and agreement of its participants.

Because it usually only has about 15 to 25 attendees at each meeting, the SRWR has been able to encourage everyone in attendance to participate to the fullest extent and ensure that everyone understood each other and agreed with the decision taken.⁵³⁰ While this sometimes had the result of making decision making very slow, the SRWR felt that the benefits of making sure that everyone had his or her say far outweighed the costs of delay. As Mike Romaine observed,

I would go to these meetings and my god the time we would spend on planning would absolutely astound me. And I guess after going through that for a couple of years I realized, this isn't planning, this is education and getting to know each other and some of the guys are planning and there is planning going on, but it is an education process of all members and bringing everybody up to the same level.⁵³¹

Mike Romaine believes this type of approach may be critical to ensuring equity in decision making:

Anybody that walks away from that table can honestly say they got a fair hearing. It is fair and there was no manipulation of the agenda.⁵³²

At the same time, this time-consuming approach to ensuring that everyone at the table participates equitably can in some ways result in inequities if people who cannot afford to spend that much time at the table can no longer participate. According to Tom Brighthouse:

⁵²⁶ SRWR, *The Salmon River* [note 77], p. 2.

⁵²⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵²⁸ Project Interviewee 17, Wallis [note 11].

⁵²⁹ SRWR, *The Salmon River* [note 77].

⁵³⁰ Project Interviewee 15, Brighthouse [note 1].

⁵³¹ Project Interviewee 18, Romaine [note 13].

⁵³² *Ibid.*

It was so expensive of people's time that we did lose some people. My next door neighbours said we are not going to any more of those meetings it just takes too much time. I think its a natural tendency; people don't want to spend time, all day Saturday and all day Sunday at meetings, so they were quite enthusiastic at first and they support the Roundtable completely. But to sit at meetings, especially if your back is bad. It is also difficult for the farmers. Not a lot of farmers are there at any one meeting. But there are a few people like ourselves, who are retired and interested at the meetings, and we would carry the bulk of the meetings I think, and the people from the various government departments. But that doesn't mean to say that the farmers are not supporting it.⁵³³

The Roundtable has attempted to deal with this problem in several ways, such as establishing an executive committee of the SRWR that can meet more frequently and work out a lot of the main issues and present them to the general membership in order to reduce the time consumed in regular Roundtable meetings. While this deals in some ways with the time constraints that some people face, it introduces other inequities in the sense that the positions reached in the executive committee meeting could quite likely shape the decisions made by the Roundtable. However, there are invariably problems in trying to include everybody in meaningful decision making and the SRWR has endeavoured to be as inclusive and equitable in its decision-making processes as possible. It has even devised a strategy to facilitate participation in the future if its membership becomes "too large to all fit in one room" by dividing the Roundtable into local community sub-tables which will then each plan individually and integrate their plans into the larger Roundtable.⁵³⁴ Thus, the SRWR is extremely committed to inclusive and equitable planning and will do whatever is necessary to facilitate it. Dorothy Argent concluded,

I think the process is really critical and that because the other decision making processes aren't inclusive and shared in genuine decision making, you don't get the on the ground results. It is better to go slower and you have something that comes out that is lasting and meaningful.⁵³⁵

Another key principle of equity is ensuring that there is a relative degree of fairness in the distribution of social and economic costs and benefits arising from the initiative. This is a difficult principle to evaluate, particularly at this point in time because the SRWR Integrated Watershed Plan has not yet been fully developed. In their activities to date, the SRWR tried to be very careful not to impose any costs on anyone as a result of their restoration initiatives. Through their policy of not pointing fingers they have tried to be very cognizant of the economic pressures that many people in the watershed face. Mike Wallis observed,

⁵³³ Project Interviewee 15, Brighthouse [note 1].

⁵³⁴ SRWR, *The Salmon River* [note 77], p. 8.

⁵³⁵ Project Interviewee 19, Argent [note 39].

There are economic constraints that these guys are facing and I think that if you look at the problems that do exist where practices are not as they should be on private land and where the landowner is doing something inappropriate with cattle or something like that – that is an economic pressure that he is under and you cannot expect him to voluntarily give that up unless he can make a living in some other way, because he is going to go broke and lose his land.⁵³⁶

Thus in trying to encourage restoration along the river, the SRWR by providing 75 percent of the funding necessary to undertake the restoration work, has tried to remove the economic constraints that in some cases prevent landowners from undertaking restoration activities on their own.

One could argue that the landowners are receiving a benefit from the SRWR initiative, restoration of their land that other members of the watershed are not receiving. However, any landowner can volunteer their land for restoration work and the landowners do often pay more than the 25 percent cost because they sometimes have to remove some of the restored parts of land from production. Moreover, the entire watershed will benefit from the improved water quality, reduced erosion and better fish habitat that the restoration work is facilitating.

It is difficult to judge the overall impacts of the SRWR on the distribution of costs and benefits in the absence of the watershed plan. Nevertheless, the SRWR *Planning Guide* repeatedly emphasizes the importance of finding win-win solutions and suggests that the SRWR will be very careful to avoid imposing costs on citizens of the watershed in achieving SRWR goals:

Removing stream side and wetland zones from production involves a cost to the landowner. Developing tax benefits through land trust operations and possible trades for crown land might reduce or eliminate such costs.⁵³⁷

One might argue that the SRWR might take its avoidance of imposing costs too far. In some cases it might be desirable to impose costs on individuals and corporations who have been making profits off the resources of the watershed for years without paying the costs of the damage that their activities have incurred.

The question of promoting a more equitable overall distribution of social and economic costs and benefits in society was addressed above in the section on effectiveness. As noted, the SRWR has not yet ventured into issues of social justice and economic activities. This may be in part because it is not ready to begin to address these issues, or senses that the watershed is not ready for it.

⁵³⁶ Project Interviewee 17, Wallis [note 8].

⁵³⁷ SRWR, *The Salmon River* [note 77], p. 7.

Conclusions

In the minds of many of its participants and observers, the SRWR is an extremely effective, efficient and equitable initiative. The SRWR has accomplished a significant amount in the way of planning and restoration in the Salmon River watershed, particularly given the limited resources with which it has to operate. In its approach to planning and restoration, the SRWR has effectively promoted sustainability by utilizing the ecosystem approach, stressing the need for both prevention and restoration, recognizing the importance of giving ecological, economic and social concerns equal consideration, and taking an adaptive approach with its "living" plan. At the same time, the SRWR is not a perfectly effective process. To date, it has been less than effective at encouraging individuals, agencies and corporations to operate in a more sustainable manner in the watershed. This is linked to the fact that the SRWR does not have any official authority in the watershed and cannot afford to alienate the individuals, agencies and corporations that support it through their participation or offers of funding. However, the SRWR's commitment to positive, cooperative action and education may pay off in the long run by fostering slow changes in people's understanding and attitudes that could lead to more sustainable activities in the watershed. Key members of the SRWR are confident that this slow process of change has already started to occur.

The SRWR's planning process is slow. However, the SRWR's commitment to thorough planning in which the information required is identified and collected, time is taken to ensure the participation and buy-in of important watershed stakeholders, and participants are given time to change their minds and attitudes, may ultimately prove to be more efficient in terms of promoting sustainability the long run than many other faster approaches to planning. It is quite likely that a better plan will be produced and there will be more commitment within the watershed to seeing it implemented. Moreover, the SRWR has accomplished a significant amount in restoration, relationship building, education and connecting the people, agencies and corporations that operate in the watershed while it has been engaging in planning. The SRWR has also made a concerted effort to welcome and encourage the participation of as many people, agencies and corporations in the watershed as possible and through its consensus based decision-making processes has endeavoured to incorporate the perspectives of all participants in an equitable manner.

The SRWR has implications for sustainability for the Salmon River watershed, the Okanagan-Shuswap region and for BC. The degree of overall impact that the SRWR has had on the ecological health of the Salmon River watershed is difficult to measure. Certainly, the SRWR has had positive impacts at specific sites on the river. The SRWR is currently engaging in a water quality and quantity monitoring study and plans to continue monitoring water quality and quantity in the Salmon River well into the future. Thus it should soon have hard data that indicate whether its efforts have had an impact on water quality and quantity of the river. But any restorative action is a step in the right direction, whether or not the SRWR's restoration efforts along the Salmon River have any measurable impact. It is often argued that ecological impacts are cumulative in nature, such that a single impact in itself has little effect, but multiple impacts have a cumulative effect. It is not improbable that restoration actions also have a cumulative effect. A single action or the actions of a single group may have little measurable

impact, but those actions taken with the actions of other individuals and groups may have a much larger cumulative effect. Thus, it may be years before the full ecological benefits of restoration are clearly seen, which underscores the importance of the continued efforts of groups such as the SRWR. Away from the riverbanks, the SRWR's overall effects on the sustainability of the watershed may be more minimal, due to its more limited ability to take action in other parts of the watershed. However, this may change over time as the partnerships it has developed with the people, agencies and corporations operating in the watershed, allow the SRWR to have greater influence over the activities in the watershed through its integrated watershed plan.

The SRWR's impacts on the community of the watershed are likewise hard to evaluate. Critics could argue that it has failed to engage the majority of people that have a stake in the health of the river. However, in our society of multiple distractions from careers, TV, recreational pursuits and the internet, the fact that it has engaged a large number of people in actively planning and engaging in field action in association with their watershed is a victory. The value of the potential educational and ecological consciousness building effects of having citizens of the watershed, landowners and school children experience the outdoors and engaging in stewardship activities in their watershed should not be underestimated. Moreover, the positive benefits of allowing many people to gain leadership and organizational experience through their work on the SRWR will also extend to many other activities in the community in the future. This will likely have positive benefits for community sustainability, if the individuals involved in the SRWR carry the principles of the SRWR into their other activities. For example, one of the former Chairs of the SRWR was elected to the Columbia-Shuswap Regional District Board in 1998.

The SRWR has also had positive impacts for the Okanagan-Shuswap as a whole. The Salmon River flows through a small northern part of the Okanagan-Shuswap region and the direct ecological benefits of the SRWR's activities will not be felt significantly in much of the Okanagan. Nevertheless, the SRWR has participated faithfully in the Okanagan-Shuswap LRMP for three years and has carried its vision of community consensus-based ecosystem management on the watershed level to the table. While it may not have been able to have its principles fully integrated into the OSLRMP, it has likely made an impression on the other participants in the OSLRMP who might carry the vision of the SRWR to other future activities and planning processes in the Okanagan-Shuswap. Likewise, through its work with representatives from corporations, such as Riverside Forest Products, a major forest licensee in the Okanagan-Shuswap, and government agencies that operate in the Okanagan-Shuswap, it has also helped to shape the future decisions of these individuals.

For BC and beyond, the SRWR has served as a model of how community-based watershed stewardship can be carried out. As Mark Cantwell and J.C. Day noted, the SRWR "is widely considered as a model for community-based holistic planning and management."⁵³⁸ It has attracted the interest of many government agencies, NGOs, and researchers and its experiences

⁵³⁸ Mark Cantwell and J.C. Day, "Citizen Initiated River Basin Planning: The Salmon Watershed Example," *Environments*, Vol 25 (2&3), 1998.

have been shared with other watershed groups around the province. It has demonstrated to other community-based watershed groups that it is possible to get funding on a relatively consistent basis to support watershed restoration work and planning. The SRWR also played a key role in the establishment of the BC Watershed Stewardship Alliance, which might play an important role in promoting watershed stewardship and management in BC in the future. One of the former SRWR participants and agency champions, Mike Romaine, retired from his job and became the chair of the BC Watershed Stewardship Alliance. Finally, if the SRWR's efforts to restore the Salmon River watershed are successful in the future, they may lead to the recovery of the declining historic salmon runs in the river which would be a significant contribution to the ecological, economic and social sustainability of BC.

Although initiatives such as the SRWR have many positive impacts, they face a conundrum in the short term regarding their ability to integrate principles of sustainability into planning. In the short term, because it is not part of a government agency or corporation, the SRWR can take a more radical approach to planning. Thus it can integrate principles of sustainability, such as taking an ecosystem approach, viewing ecological, economic and social needs as equally important, and working on the basis of consensus, into its vision and mandate to a greater extent than agencies and corporations that are held back by a variety of forces promoting the status quo. But by the same token, because it is not a government agency or corporation and therefore has no official authority in the watershed and is dependent on government agencies and corporations for the funding it requires to survive, the practical power of the SRWR to implement its vision and change activities occurring on crown and private land in the watershed is more limited. The fact that the SRWR does not have assured funding is a limiting factor that prevents it from establishing firm long-term plans for watershed stewardship. Likewise, because it has a much smaller budget than most government agencies, it can only fund a limited number of activities in the watershed.

Although the SRWR faces many short term challenges in changing behaviour in the Salmon River watershed, long term initiatives such as the SRWR seem capable of promoting slow changes in understanding, attitudes and relationships among citizens, agencies and corporations and may play a central role in achieving sustainability. Even if the SRWR is unable to foster significant changes in understanding, attitudes and relationships, voluntary action by concerned citizens is still a critical part of the sustainability equation. It is unlikely that we can regulate our way to sustainability, and governments seem to lack the ability and resources to make or encourage all of the changes in our behaviours that are necessary for sustainability. As Calvin Sandborn noted,

the job is too big for government alone. There are limits on government's ability to act - high levels of government debt, relatively high taxation levels and resistance to government regulation all constrain what government can accomplish today.⁵³⁹

⁵³⁹ Calvin Sandborn, *Green Space and Growth: Conserving Natural Areas in B.C. Communities* (Victoria: Commission on Resources and Environment, 1996), p. 13.

Moreover, the SRWR has an ability to have an impact on *private land* that the government, with its limited resources and low level of credibility among many landowners, may never have. Although it is often ignored, private land is critical to sustainability. As Calvin Sandborn has observed,

Although only six percent of BC's land base is privately owned, this land is concentrated in the fertile temperate valleys and includes some of the most biologically important areas of the province. In the Okanagan, southern Vancouver Island and the lower mainland, where most endangered ecosystems are located, a large percentage of the critical habitat is on private land. The ecological fate of those lands depends upon the voluntary stewardship of land owners.⁵⁴⁰

The issue of private land is particularly critical in the Okanagan-Shuswap, where private land makes up 12 percent of the region,⁵⁴¹ and in the Salmon River Watershed where 80 percent of the land along the Salmon River is privately owned.⁵⁴² Because of their key role in achieving sustainability, initiatives such as the SRWR should be provided with more committed long term funding and greater agency support.

Change, particularly change of the magnitude required for sustainability, is often a slow process and tenacity is frequently the determining factor in success. Through its continued interaction with watershed citizens, government agencies and corporations, the SRWR may slowly foster the changes that it seeks and have its vision implemented. In evaluating the effectiveness of an initiative such as the SRWR, one must remember that the SRWR is an ongoing initiative and is only in its ninth year of operation. We may well find that many initiatives that truly promote ecological, social and economic sustainability are many years in the making, requiring years of ground work before they can truly fulfill the principles of promoting sustainability effectively, efficiently and equitably. Thus, the SRWR's greatest successes may lie in the future and may be the result of the groundwork it has laid and the momentum it has established now. Only time will tell if initiatives such as the SRWR are as central to achieving sustainability as they appear to be. But in the interim, more committed funding and citizen and government agency support for community driven initiatives such as the SRWR could be a critical step forward in promoting sustainability. As Mike Romaine suggested, sometimes you just have to act "more on a philosophy of faith that this is a better way of doing it."⁵⁴³

⁵⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 150.

⁵⁴¹ Project Interviewee 9, Ministry of Forests, October 1997.

⁵⁴² Project Interviewee 18, Romaine, [note 13].

⁵⁴³ *Ibid.*

6 Conclusions

Effectively, efficiently and equitably incorporating principles of sustainability into urban and rural land use planning is a key challenge of the next decade, particularly in regions subject to growth pressures. Urban and rural land use in Canada has created a complex array of ecological, economic and social problems. The Okanagan-Shuswap region in the southern interior of BC epitomizes many of these problems. It is a region of many ecological, social and economic advantages – picturesque valleys and lakes that attract tourists from across the country, high value agricultural land, and unique arid ecosystems with a high level of biodiversity and species found nowhere else in the world. However, it is also a region where these ecological, social and economic values are under significant and increasing pressure. These pressures arise both from current urban and rural land use patterns and from population growth trends, which suggest that the population of the region will almost double by the year 2021.

In the 1990s, due to growing awareness and concern regarding the ecological, social and economic costs of growth, a variety of land use planning initiatives focused on issues of sustainability began to emerge in the Okanagan-Shuswap. Three such initiatives were examined for this research – the Regional District of Central Okanagan’s Regional Growth Strategy process (RDCO RGS), the Community/Crown Interface (CCI) Zone in the Okanagan-Shuswap Land and Resource Management Planning (OSLRMP) process, and the Salmon River Watershed Roundtable (SRWR) community stewardship initiative. The objective has been to determine how effectively, efficiently and equitably they incorporated principles of sustainability.

Results

REGIONAL DISTRICT OF CENTRAL OKANAGAN – REGIONAL GROWTH STRATEGY

The Regional District of Central Okanagan (RDCO) initiated its Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) in 1996. The original workplan for the RDCO RGS was promising. It included plans to conduct a variety of studies to determine the ecological, social and economic cost of growth and develop a consensus regarding where growth can occur based on an understanding of the implications. However, this workplan was “simplified and refocused” and many of the originally planned studies and tasks were never completed. In early 1999, RDCO completed a draft *Growth Management Strategy Framework*. In late 1999, a draft RDCO RGS bylaw, containing only section one of the framework document, was completed. Work is ongoing to finalize the draft bylaw. Further work planned includes the development of issue papers, action plans and implementation agreements for the key issue areas.

The potential effectiveness of the draft RDCO RGS bylaw as a vehicle for bringing principles of sustainability into planning is questionable. The draft bylaw is long on

motherhood statements but short on detail. While some of the bylaw contents stress the importance of ecological sustainability, there is no indication that avoiding ecological harm will prevail over ensuring sufficient economic development. References to sustainability at the moment are so weak and vague that local governments in the regional district could make planning decisions consistent with the RGS but completely inconsistent with sustainability. The strategies/actions in the section two of the framework document are more detailed and reflect a greater commitment to ecological sustainability. However, local government officials and staff were not prepared to commit to the level of detail contained in section two of the framework when the draft RGS bylaw was developed. While the RGS bylaw has not yet been finalized and implementation agreements being developed may contain more detailed strategies/actions, it is not yet clear when the bylaw or its implementation agreements will be completed or what they will contain.

The RDCO RGS process was inexpensive. Money and time were saved by simplifying and refocusing the RGS process and avoiding extensive public consultation and data collection. However, these short term savings may prove to be long term inefficiencies if the RGS's knowledge base on public sentiment and ecological, social and economic constraints to growth proves to have been insufficient, or if the RGS proves to be too vague to serve as an effective guide for planning. The RGS process also had some procedural equity shortcomings due to the lack of significant public consultation on issues that are critical to their future well being.

COMMUNITY/CROWN INTERFACE ZONE

The community/crown interface zone (CCI zone) is a resource management zone being developed as a component of the Okanagan-Shuswap Land and Resource Management Planning (OSLRMP) process initiated in February 1996. The OSLRMP is a provincial, participatory, consensus based planning process in which public participants are developing a land use and resource management plan for the crown land in the Okanagan-Shuswap sub-region. When completed, the plan will be implemented by the provincial government. The CCI zone and draft objectives were proposed in 1997 by the regional districts participating in the OSLRMP process.

The CCI zone extends from the private land boundary and across major lakes to the visual height of land in settled areas, and from all major travel corridors to the visual height of land non-settled areas. The goal of the CCI zone planning work was to promote greater sustainability and better coordination between provincial and local governments in the interface area. Based on the regional districts' proposal, a CCI working group of the OSLRMP worked to develop a set of objectives and strategies for the CCI zone that all OSLRMP participants could agree on. As of May 2000, the OSLRMP participants had reached agreement in principle on draft 8 of the CCI zone section of the OSLRMP plan. The OSLRMP process was expected to be completed in the year 2000.

The notion of a special CCI zone recognizes that the impacts of private land use spill over on to crown land and that the impacts of crown land use spill over into private land. This is important from a sustainability perspective, and the original CCI zone proposal looked

promising. However, the modifications to the CCI zone section in the OSLRMP plan gradually weakened its potential contribution to sustainability.

The introduction to the draft 6 CCI zone section stresses the importance of sustainability. However, most of the objectives are weak or focused on processes rather than substantive results. There is no doubt that consultation is important. Ensuring that local governments are consulted by provincial government agencies and resource development companies regarding activities in the CCI zone could promote a more holistic understanding and even facilitate use of an ecosystem approach to managing the interface area. By itself, however, greater consultation may do little to change activities in the CCI zone, especially where the local government involved is not concerned about sustainability.

An expressed original goal of the CCI zone was to prevent further urban sprawl onto crown land. This goal has since been watered down. The relevant objective now simply states that the provincial government should not allow the disposition of crown land for settlement purposes unless it is planned out in an OCP or done in consultation with the local government involved. This may not be strong enough to prevent sprawl in areas where the local government wishes to expand its boundaries.

By piggy-backing on the OSLRMP process, planning for the CCI zone has been relatively efficient. Because all of the participants and funding were already in place, the CCI zone planning was inexpensive, although it added to the agenda of an already lengthy and expensive process. Likewise, because the OSLRMP focused on ensuring the full participation of all stakeholder groups with an interest in land and resource management in the sub-region, the process for CCI zone development was reasonably equitable. This procedural equity will help to ensure that there is stakeholder support for the zone, lessening chances that it will be overturned or have to be reworked in a few years.

SALMON RIVER WATERSHED ROUNDTABLE

The Salmon River Watershed Roundtable (SRWR) is a planning and stewardship initiative being carried out primarily by concerned local citizens, although it does have significant local, provincial and federal government participation. The Roundtable emerged from a group of concerned citizens, First Nations groups and elected officials participating on a District of Salmon Arm Environment Committee established in 1991.

Over the past eight years, the SRWR has engaged in many planning activities, including developing a Strategic Plan for the Roundtable, and working towards developing a comprehensive “living” plan aimed at promoting the ecological, social and economic sustainability of the Salmon River watershed. The SRWR has also participated extensively in the Okanagan-Shuswap Land and Resource Management Planning process.

No less significantly, the SRWR has been very active in promoting and coordinating volunteer restoration activities on private lands by the landowners living along the Salmon River and has been able to obtain significant public and private funding to undertake these activities

on an ongoing basis. By 1998, the SRWR had undertaken restoration activities on over 30 sites comprising over seven percent of the Salmon River within their watershed and had over 40 sites on its waiting list. School and youth groups have played major roles in field restoration activities and monitoring.

The SRWR has been very effective at incorporating sustainability considerations in practice as well as in planning. Through its field action it has actively engaged in both restoration and prevention and has helped to foster a sense of environmental stewardship in its members and the community. It has educated many members of the public regarding their watershed and it has collected significant data on the ecosystem health of the watershed. In its planning efforts, the SRWR has emphasized the importance of the ecosystem approach, rehabilitation of existing ecological damage and prevention of further ecological harm. It has also stressed the need for giving ecological, social and economic concerns equal consideration in achieving sustainability and has taken an adaptive approach with its notion of a “living” plan.

Despite the strengths of its planning process, the SRWR has not really been able to influence activities in the watershed to a significant degree. This is primarily because it lacks real authority over crown or private land in the watershed. The SRWR has also avoided pointing fingers and demanding changes because it has not wanted to alienate the agencies that it depended on for support and funding. SRWR members are, nevertheless, confident that they will have a significant influence over the long run, through the changes in understanding and attitudes the SRWR has fostered and the relationships and partnerships it has developed with a variety of people, government agencies and corporations.

The SRWR has also been a relatively efficient process. While its planning work is taking a long time, this is in part because the SRWR is doing a thorough job by ensuring that it has data, full buy-in from its members, and support from the community so that its plan will last a long time without having to be completely revised. Moreover, the SRWR has been engaging in restoration and prevention activities at the same time it is planning. It has also greatly assisted in coordinating the activities of government and non-government agencies in the watershed. All of its activities are undertaken on a budget that is much lower than the cost of having a government agency undertake them. As well the SRWR reflects many ideals of procedural equity. It has been very open and inclusive in its planning processes welcoming anyone in the community or government that wishes to participate. It makes decisions by consensus and ensures that everyone has the opportunity to have his or her concerns explored.

Overall Successes and Disappointments

There were overall successes and disappointments associated with the three cases examined. While the case discussions above identify many shortcomings of the initiatives, criticism should be tempered by recognition that the initiatives have been judged against ideal principles. No current initiative is likely to satisfy fully all, or even most, of these principles.

There were many successes. All three initiatives generated dialogue regarding sustainability in the Okanagan-Shuswap. The RDCO RGS and CCI zone planning fostered significant deliberations regarding growth and sustainability among local governments within a regional district in the case of the RDCO RGS, and among the local governments within the whole Okanagan-Shuswap in the case of the CCI zone. The SRWR brought together citizens, agencies and corporations operating in the Salmon River watershed to discuss the sustainability of the watershed.

All three initiatives encouraged greater understanding and application of the ecosystem approach. The RDCO RGS and CCI zone reinforced the fact that local and provincial governments in the region should take an ecosystem approach and look beyond their own jurisdictional boundaries to jointly and cooperatively address issues of sustainability and urban and rural land use and helped build relationships among governments in the region. The SRWR explicitly advocated greater use of watershed boundaries for planning purposes and built partnerships among the individuals and groups with a stake in the Salmon River watershed.

Directly and indirectly, the three initiatives may be a first step forward in moving towards sustainability in the Okanagan-Shuswap region. For example, the RDCO draft RGS bylaw may lead to more comprehensive and effective implementation agreements as local governments in the regional district work to increase the level of detail that they can agree upon. Moreover, the three initiatives served as a valuable learning experience for the individuals, agencies and corporations involved, particularly where some participants in the initiatives were sustainability oriented and may have influenced participants that were less sustainability oriented in a positive way.

Finally, all three initiatives have had their own individual successes. The SRWR has accomplished an amazing amount of restoration, partnership building and citizen involvement. The CCI zone and the RDCO RGS have had less tangible results, but may give local governments that wish to promote sustainability in the Okanagan-Shuswap more opportunity and/or encouragement to do so.

There were, however, also many overall disappointments with the initiatives. None of the initiatives ensures any change in urban and rural land use in the Okanagan-Shuswap. The RDCO RGS is sufficiently vague that implementing it could require no changes in the way urban and rural land use are carried out in the regional district. The CCI zone primarily increases consultation between local and provincial government agencies, which depending on the local government, may or may not translate into any changes in urban and rural land use patterns. The SRWR has little authority to enforce any changes in urban and rural land use and while it is confident that the government agencies, citizens and corporations that it is working with will eventually change their activities in the Salmon River watershed, it has not seen any significant changes to date.

The RDCO RGS and CCI zone initiatives, and to a much lesser extent the SRWR, do not reflect appreciation of the magnitude of changes in urban and rural land use practices that may

be necessary to achieve sustainability. The do initiatives talk about sustainability as a goal but they tend to imply that the modest measures outlined will be sufficient to reach this goal. The RDCO RGS and CCI zone initiatives in particular risk promoting complacency by suggesting that sustainability will be achieved with little change or inconvenience.

Barriers to Greater Success

INGRAINED ATTITUDES

Ingrained attitudes on the part of citizens, agencies, and corporations were a key barrier to greater success in incorporating principles of sustainability in all three of the initiatives examined. The RDCO RGS and CCI zone experiences highlight some of the difficulties associated with incorporating sustainability considerations into planning in a region where many members of the public and several local governments equate growth with economic prosperity, where the long favoured form of urban expansion is low density, and where the costs of such growth are not yet as apparent as they are in larger urban centres. The SRWR case demonstrates that many government agencies, while they may participate in grassroots initiatives, are still not keen to relinquish any of their own control over a watershed.

Many of these attitudes are understandable given the manner in which urban and rural land use has been carried out for many years. Gradual changes in these attitudes are now beginning to appear. Low-density growth is slowly being recognized as a threat to the current quality of life, and a potential cost for taxpayers. As well there are some indications of citizens gaining greater influence over what happens in their region or watershed.

VESTED INTERESTS

Many participants in growth management initiatives also have a vested interest in maintaining current growth patterns. This is a particular problem in consensus processes in which most stakeholders have to agree before a decision is made. In such circumstances, desire for agreement favours decline to the least demanding position. Initially ambitious initiatives such as the CCI zone and the RDCO RGS get watered down and few changes to current activities and practices are adopted.

Vested interests are not limited to individuals and groups with direct personal or economic interest, such as politicians who wish to stay in office, developers who wish to profit from continually expanding urban boundaries, or resource development companies that wish to continue extracting resources in the familiar manner. Most members of the public also have vested commitment to established practices, such as driving a car to work and owning a single family detached dwelling in a low-density neighbourhood, that have negative implications for sustainability. The same people, however, also have an interest in maintaining aspects of their quality of life, such as clean air, minimal congestion and easy access to well preserved recreational areas, that are threatened by unmanaged urban sprawl.

LIMITED RESOURCES

All of the initiatives suffered from limited resources, and this may have played some role in failures to be more effective in incorporating principles of sustainability. Inadequate resources constrain what can be done in a planning process. For example in the RDCO RGS, limited staff and financial resources restricted the number and type of studies that could be carried out in preparing the bylaw. Lack of resources also affects what can be implemented. For example, the SRWR's limited resources have left a large number of landowners on the waiting list for restoration projects. Resource restrictions on what can be implemented also limit what can be included in the plan. For example, a local government with insufficient resources to conduct environmental assessments of major new developments is unlikely to favour an RGS that calls for such assessments even if people within the local government feel that those assessments are desirable. Likewise, a government lacking the resources to enforce particular environmental regulations, such as water use restrictions, might not include those kinds of regulations in its plans.

In the Okanagan-Shuswap cases, resource limits seem not to have been the primary barriers to effective incorporation of sustainability principles in growth management. But certainly in the CCI zone planning discussions, resource limits did play a role, and throughout the region they provided additional reasons for hesitation on the part of local governments and other stakeholders with little commitment to change.

INSUFFICIENT/INAPPROPRIATE LEGISLATION AND POLICY

The initiatives examined might have produced stronger results if there had been firmer provincial support for sustainability planning and action. The provincial *Growth Strategies Act* is very broad and permissive. While it enables regional districts to consider a wide range of factors in their RGS process, it does not require them to do so. Under the current law, regional districts can produce very broad RGSs that do little to promote sustainability. Moreover, the legislation places little power in the hands of the regional district. Because the local governments within the regional district must agree to the RGS, its contents are easily diluted by local governments that are not sustainability oriented.

The political foundation for the CCI zone plan and other parts of the OSLRMP is also fragile. The CCI zone provisions will likely be adopted as Cabinet policy, but under current law, local governments in the region will have no obligation to follow it. Even the provincial government agencies in the region will have no legal obligation to follow the portions of the OSLRMP that are only Cabinet policy.

In both cases, the weakness of provincial support may not reflect disinterest in sustainability so much as fear of municipal hostility to provincial impositions. Local governments in British Columbia have a long history of resisting loss of their authority to provincial or regional bodies. The largely voluntary, consensus based approach taken by the *Growth Strategies Act* and the LRMP exercises reflects the province's desire to foster more sustainable regional planning without offending the municipalities. Whether this strategy can be successful is debatable.

In the case of the SRWR, support of a different kind has been needed. Here a major difficulty has been the absence of any reasonably assured longer term funding. While the SRWR has managed to obtain funding from a succession of programs, its experience reveals the unfortunate failure of senior governments to provide more consistent, longer term support even for a community group with an established record of success in sustainability planning and restoration work and demonstrably high community support.

Key Lessons

The three Okanagan-Shuswap cases offer some key lessons for future initiatives.

COMPLEMENTARY DIVERSITY

It is unlikely that any current initiative can satisfy all of the principles of sustainability. If sustainability is to be achieved, it will likely be through the complementary positive effects of a wide variety of planning initiatives operating in conjunction with each other.

Each of the Okanagan-Shuswap initiatives has both strengths and weaknesses in incorporating principles of sustainability into planning. The SRWR can integrate principles of sustainability into its vision and plan more aggressively than agencies and corporations that serve established interests. It may also be more effective at getting the landowners, who typically distrust government agencies, to participate in restoration work. At the same time, because the SRWR does not have decision-making power in the watershed, it can impose nothing. Law based, government mandated initiatives, such as the RDCO RGS and CCI zone, may simply "tinker around the margins" of sustainability promotion, but the changes that they do authorise may have a reasonably good chance of being implemented.

Thus, it is likely that a combination of planning initiatives, each with the ability to foster different types of changes is necessary if sustainability is to be achieved. Individually each of these initiatives may contribute little to sustainability, but taken together with other initiatives they might have an significant impact in the Okanagan-Shuswap and elsewhere.

IMPERFECT BUT IMPLEMENTABLE PRODUCTS

The initiatives confirm that in order to get a product that the important stakeholders are willing to implement, small gains may be all that can be achieved. The RDCO RGS and CCI zone have shortcomings from a sustainability perspective, but they were developed with the participation and agreement of many of the major stakeholders that would be involved in implementing the initiative. The SRWR also recognizes the importance of willing support, but since it has no official authority in the watershed, it has taken the route of devising a more sustainability oriented plan, with the participation of many of the important stakeholders. The hope is that this will contribute to longer term changes in ecological consciousness leading to broader acceptance and eventual implementation.

COMMUNITY OWNERSHIP

The cases also suggest that a sense of community ownership is likely to be critical for the success of sustainability efforts. Even initiatives such as the RGS and CCI which can affect law based requirements may not foster significant changes in behaviour in the absence of community support. As Mike Romaine noted,

If you look at the Kamloops LRMP. The monitoring committee meets once or twice a year and the sectors sort of say, “Well what has been done?” They haven’t taken ownership. If you go to the Salmon River if somebody has had some restoration work done on their property, they would be happy to take you out there. If something goes wrong, they are monitoring it. They support it and they have taken ownership of that process. And when it comes to a watershed plan they will take ownership of it. So that is the difference. One belongs to the community. The other has been imposed on them.⁵⁴⁴

Because of this, the sustainability work of the SRWR may be more successful, or at least win easier implementation in the long run, than initiatives such as the RDCO RGS, which was developed with limited public consultation.

LEARNING

All of the initiatives to some extent illustrate the importance of educating citizens, agencies, and corporations regarding sustainability. The SRWR's activities have consistently included a strong educational component and key members of the SRWR feel that they have made some progress in fostering an ecological consciousness in their watershed. Many of these SRWR members have themselves learned a tremendous amount about sustainability, grassroots organization and leadership, which will likely benefit the watershed in the future.

The RDCO RGS and the CCI zone work also may illustrate the importance of education. In both initiatives, some local governments and individuals felt significant changes in urban and rural land use were necessary to achieve sustainability. Even though the ultimate results of the RDCO RGS and CCI zone were disappointing, the sustainability oriented participants may have encouraged at least some learning on the part of the other participants.

LEADERSHIP

All three initiatives reflect the critical importance of leadership in starting the initiative, keeping it going and winning the necessary support. As Tom Brighthouse of the SRWR observed,

Dorothy and Neils were the catalyst in my opinion and I’m just an all round admirer of what they did. But you know I like doing things for a weekend. I can be committed for a weekend but theirs is a six-year commitment almost full time. I don’t have that kind of stamina. I have been involved all the time but not anywhere near to that extent. It takes

⁵⁴⁴ Project Interviewee 18, Mike Romaine, Salmon River Watershed Roundtable Participant, June 1997.

somebody like Neils and Dorothy to have that long term commitment and make it not just a hobby but their passion.⁵⁴⁵

A long range planner at RDCO was likewise credited with the ambitious and comprehensive nature of the initial approaches to both the RDCO RGS and the CCI zone. One project interviewee noted, “Tracy is really responsible for the CCI proposal. She took those other Regional Districts and guided them through the whole thing. The leadership she has shown is just outstanding.”⁵⁴⁶

TENACITY AND PATIENCE

All three initiatives also point to the importance of tenacity and patience. Moving towards sustainability is a process – and it is a slow process. Changes in attitudes, actions, and regulation do not occur over night. Mike Wallis of the SRWR noted that you must give people time to change their minds and Mike Romaine of the SRWR likened it to slowly peeling the layers off an onion. Tom Brighthouse pointed out that the tenacity of the leaders of the SRWR has led to its continuing success.

Acceptance of the need for patience and tenacity is, however, tempered by recognition that we may not have a lot of time to make the shift to more sustainable urban and rural land use practices. As Mike Romaine observed, “your guess is as good as mine as to whether time is on anyone’s side.”⁵⁴⁷ Being patient and accepting an imperfect product that is a step in the right direction does not mean that we should not push for as many changes as possible as quickly as possible.

Taken together, the lessons of the Regional District of Central Okanagan Regional Growth Strategy, Community/Crown Interface Zone, and Salmon River Watershed Roundtable initiatives are perhaps not unlike those to be expected in many communities where the ecological, social and economic costs of growth have not yet become apparent to many people. The strengths and weaknesses of these initiatives suggest that if sustainability is to be achieved, it will likely be through a variety of planning initiatives operating in conjunction with each other.

Regulatory initiatives, such as the RDCO RGS and CCI zone, often simply tinker on the margins of promoting sustainability, due to lack of political will or public support for major change. At the same time, the changes that they do promote may have a reasonably good chance of being implemented. Community driven initiatives, such as the SRWR, can take a more sustainability oriented approach to planning and restoration, and can be very effective at

⁵⁴⁵ Project Interviewee 15, Tom Brighthouse, Salmon River Watershed Roundtable Participant, May 1997.

⁵⁴⁶ Project Interviewee 12, Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks, November 1997.

⁵⁴⁷ Project Interviewee 18, Romaine [note 1].

fostering environmental stewardship, but have more difficulty ensuring that their vision is implemented or producing changes in regulation or legislation.

While none of the initiatives reviewed is perfect, taken together initiatives such as these are making a difference, albeit perhaps a small one, in the Okanagan-Shuswap. A key lesson offered by all three initiatives is that moving towards sustainability is a process – and it is a slow one. Changes in attitudes, actions and regulation will not occur overnight and tenacity might be the most important characteristic of those likely to contribute most in promoting sustainability.