



POLIS Project on Ecological Governance

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## **Case Study:**

### ***Capital Regional District Water Services Demand Management Program, Victoria, British Columbia***

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The Capital Regional District (CRD) Water Services is a Canadian leader in demand management. Located on the Southern tip of Vancouver Island in a northern Mediterranean climate, the Capital Regional District Water Services is the bulk wholesale water supplier to 320,000 consumers in the Great Victoria Drinking Water System and acts as a retail supplier in the Western Communities. The CRD's serves its customers with surface water drawn from the Sooke Reservoir (CRD Web).

Over the past 10 years, total water consumption in the CRD has not increased despite a growing population. Residential users currently consume 132 lpcd and account for 70 percent of total water use, while industrial, commercial, and institutional (ICI) customers use on average 132 lpcd and account for 30 percent of total use (Walker 2008). The CRD's water conservation team is made up of five full time permanent positions, four summer university students and one winter co-op student. The Demand Management Program operating budget for 2008 was 1.5 million dollars (PC Walker 2008). The CRD is one of the few Canadian communities that has ownership over its watershed and can control human related activities that affect drinking water quality.

CRD Water conservation initiatives are geared towards both residential and ICI users and include education, toilet, washing machine, and irrigation timer rebate programs and a summer watering bylaw. In 2005 the CRD implemented a bylaw that requires the installation of 6-liter low flow toilets in new buildings, a measure that the Province of British Columbia adopted in 2008. The CRD also offers free water use and efficiency audits to businesses in Greater Victoria, and provides assistance with measurement and cost-benefit analysis of various measures to conserve water (CRD Web).

The dry summer of 2001 rallied support for water conservation as a value source of future water and instigated the implementation of a drought response plan that cut summer water use during the drought by 27.8 percent, demonstrating the potential of demand management (CRD 2002). Although the rights to the Leech River have been purchased for future infrastructure expansion and the Sooke Reservoir was raised by six meters in 2002, the CRD is looking seriously to conservation as a source of future water. The CRD hopes to defer expansion of the water supply beyond 2050 and has an interim goal of a 10 percent reduction in water use per capita demand by 2023 (Walker 2008).



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## Sources:

CRD Web. *Water Services Home Page*: <http://www.crd.bc.ca/water/>

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Personal Communications with Deborah Walker CRD Water Demand Management Coordinator, conducted by Jennifer Wong: October 1, 2008.

Walker, D.(2008). *Water Conservation: Exploring the “Wet” Coast Myths* presented at the Canadian National Conference and Policy Forum on Water Efficiency and Conservation.