

Gateway Through the Maze of Water Policy Research

Toward Overcoming the Roadblocks to Engagement

CAWQ Symposium – February 23-24,
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Centre for Sustainable Watersheds

The Information Challenge

- “Without **adequate information**, water managers cannot understand the implications of their decisions for the health of the watershed.” – The Conference Board of Canada (2007)
- Canada ranks 25th in the world when it comes to **availability** of environmental information. - Task Force on a Canadian Information System for the Environment (2003)
- “Any **increase in availability of information** for the public at large...will vastly improve water resource protection and water management at the watersheds level.” – Manitoba Eco-Network Water Caucus (2005)

Water Connections is born

- Launched in the spring of 2008
- Gateway to Canada's water information
- Original functionalities:
 - Organization Directory
 - News & Events
 - Tools & Resources
 - Data Services

The Water Policy Maze

- Massive volume – historic and current
- Multi-jurisdictional sources & mandates
- Inherent complexities
- Water science and policy interrelationships
- Is public **engagement** possible...
...or does it matter?

Development – A partnership

- Gordon Foundation
 - Extensive funding of water policy research
 - Interest in a water policy directory
 - Collaboration started on October 2008
 - Completion slated for early spring 2009
- Interested in partnering to develop the Policy Directory on *Water Connections*

How It Works

- External search function available on the Gordon Foundation website – retrieves only foundation supported resources
- Search the entire Policy Directory from waterconnect.ca
- Comprehensive search to find resources based on title, file size, author, organization, description or keyword
- Search returns provide significant details allowing you to follow the external link to the resource to continue to review the search results

Benefits

- Improve capacity/potential to:
 - Identify gaps, minimize redundancies
 - Co-relate research from disparate sources
 - Scope future research
 - Build collaborative initiatives and funding
 - Clarity in relationship of science and policy research
 - Broadening target audience and grassroots understanding
 - Widening engagement , decision-making and policy delivery

Next Steps

- Engage other organizations and agencies
- Partnership opportunities for mass import of policy resources to the Directory
- Complete map based interface
- Ongoing!

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