

# Rivers Institute of the British Columbia Institute of Technology

**JULY UPDATE, 2011**

Regarding the June 25 airing of Water for Life on Global TV, the event was a great success. We were also pleased to hear that the program topped the ratings in its time slot for all shows across the province, with a total reach of more than 250,000 people. Global received many positive comments and I think we were successful in developing a show that was both entertaining and informative. The DVD of the program will be available later this summer - more details on the Water for Life initiative can be found at [www.waterforlife2011.com/](http://www.waterforlife2011.com/)

On other fronts, work has now commenced on planning activities for both BC and World Rivers Day set for September 25. We anticipate thousands of events taking place around the world and more than 100 in BC alone. Activities will range from stream clean-ups and habitat enhancement projects to educational activities and community riverside celebrations. Details at [www.worldriversday.bcit.ca/](http://www.worldriversday.bcit.ca/)

Regarding some of our projects, our recent aerial tour of last year's massive Pemberton slide along the Lillooet River was a very productive trip - and I think there are a number of long term research opportunities we can explore that would focus on fisheries and river-related impacts along with the eventual development of a restoration strategy. The possibility of using the old Outward Bound facility as a field camp for students is also very helpful. Once I hear back from the DFO, I'll discuss with Ken Ashley, Craig Wightman, Bob Gunn and others - and we'll try to finalize a proposal. I also think there could be some substantial funding that could be obtained to cover research-related costs.

Also, I recently met with Metro Vancouver and Fraser Valley RD staff to discuss issues around governance as it relates to the Heart of the Fraser. They recognize that one of the main obstacles affecting the Heart of the Fraser conservation initiative (as well as their interest in developing a major "Experience the Fraser" trail system along this part of the river) is the lack of suitable mechanism that brings all parties/stakeholders together. This point was also highlighted in the recent Globe and Mail story I did with Mark Hume. Following this discussion, the RI has agreed to work with both regional districts once a new vision document for the "Experience the Fraser" trail project is released in October.

Along similar lines, we have an interesting project unfolding along the Rhine River in Europe which, in part, relates to governance. The Rhine has a multi-party commission in place that has had great success over the past few decades in addressing a host of planning, management and environmental issues. They are one of several different models that are worth investigating and perhaps emulating in some ways. I'll have chance to see some of their work later this year when I'm in Amsterdam. Also, regarding the Rhine, I'm pleased to say that World Rivers Day events are taking off this year across Europe, and part of this is thanks to the efforts of companies like Uniworld, a leading river tour company and now, a major WRD partner. We've been communicating extensively on how such events could be structured and they're in the process of coordinating Rivers Day festivities on the Rhine, as well as on other rivers

such as the Danube and Douro.

As you know, we also have many other projects on the go. One of these that we'll kick-start in September relates to developing a strategy to re-establish a fishery in Britannia Creek near Squamish. This undertaking, which will also focus on the recovery of Howe Sound, will develop a lot of interest - so we'll be coordinating a TV piece with Global in September. This initiative will also be the subject of a major Rivers Day event at Britannia in September.

Guichon Creek in Burnaby will also be a major area of activity this summer, given the major investment by BCIT along with our additional \$45,000 contribution (thanks to the HCTF). While BCIT will undertake a major effort to stabilize a slipping slope, we'll piggy-back on this work to significantly expand in-stream pool habitat. The planned Guichon Creek Rivers Day event (which is expected to attract a large turnout) will celebrate the creek's ongoing restoration.

I'm also continuing to work with the Chehalis First Nation on advancing the Salmon Stronghold initiative on the Harrison River. Relating to this, we're currently in discussions with Gord Ennis, who has been contracted by the DFO to do an assessment of the exciting possibilities this designation might present. The RI is also making a modest donation to the Chehalis who are undertaking a project this summer focusing on the development of a salmon stronghold implementation plan. This undertaking will also be a great compliment to the Heart of the Fraser campaign.

In addition, there are some international projects I'll be closing out this fall. Among these are the Patagonia project where we've worked with a number fledgling river-related NGO's (this has been incredibly rewarding as evidenced by some of the major recent events we discussed) along with the Indus headwaters initiative which has a few different aspects (including the anticipated impacts of climate change).

I'm also in the final stages of completing a new book and photo essay entitled *Wild Water, Wild Earth*. This is based on some of my experiences both at home and abroad - and it has a strong river conservation theme. While I'll eventually publish this externally, we'll produce a number of initial copies to promote and profile the work of the RI. The book was initially meant as a companion piece to a public lecture series.

Lastly, I've also been assisting the Australian River Foundation on a couple of fronts (including acting as a judge in the year's River prize selection). They've also asked if they could organize a special showing of our Water for Life program this September to raise funds for river restoration work in the flood ravaged part of Queensland - to which we have agreed.

- I am currently in the final stages of a new book that will be a photo essay entitled, "Wild Water, Wild Earth. I hope to have this completed by late this year. The book will have a conservation theme and a limited first edition will be produced to promote the efforts of the RI.

- In light of the success of Water for Life, I've been approached by the Image Media Farm, who produced the TV show, about the possibility of starting work on a new film focusing on river conservation and restoration. While they're very interested in events such as World Rivers Day, I think such a film could also be a great mechanism to document some of the work of the RI. Filming will probably take close to a year and, at present, there appears to be a host of possibilities in terms of where the finished program might air.

- And lastly, we're putting the finishing touches on a new admin model for the RI recognizing the fact that I'll be retiring from full time work late this year and will then carry on in a Chair Emeritus capacity in 2012. Funding for the RI has been secured for the foreseeable future and our goal is to expand capacity by bringing in several new staff. More details will provided as they become finalized.