

Workshop Report

Stewardship Works!

A Core Funding Model

May 23, 2007

Work Centre for Dialogue

Vancouver BC

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June 29, 2007



Fraser Basin Council



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Summary of Outcomes

Thirty-two representatives from funders, federal and provincial governments, and stewardship organizations met for a one-day workshop on May 23, 2007. Their task was to provide input into the draft *Stewardship Works!* core funding model proposed by the Stewardship Centre for BC (SCBC) in partnership with the Ministry of Environment.

The following points represent the general opinions of workshop participants:

- The health of community-based stewardship groups is an important issue for achievement of environmental goals, for both communities and for governments' shared stewardship programs.
- Core funding is one of a suite of related activities that affects the organizational health of non-government groups.
- If core funding is considered, it should be part of a broader overall long term strategy to deal with the health of NGOs (lack of core funding is a barrier; put core funding grants in context).
- The challenge of this program is to build capacity within stewardship organizations, without creating reliance on this fund for permanent assistance.
- There was agreement on the range of activities that are supportable by core funding. Generally, these activities are associated with the internal and external aspects of training, retraining, deploying, recruiting and retaining volunteers. (Core funding supports the capacity of groups; keep the accountabilities for core funding separate from the accountabilities for projects.)
- Management of any core funding model requires clear, transparent and equitable governance and administration processes so that as many groups as possible can benefit.
- The Stewardship Centre for BC is well-placed as being the administration manager for this grant.
- Application, reporting and evaluation requirements should be simple and electronic. The effects of core funding expenditures must be easily quantified.
- Evaluation is an important component of a core funding program that needs to be designed into the program from the outset. Evaluating the effects of core funding is different from project evaluation, and as such, needs a different set of measurement criteria, e.g. growth of organizational capacity.

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

Welcome

I live in Port Alberni, and the local group to which I belong is called Citizens' Stewardship Coalition. All of us volunteer our time and expertise to help make our local area a healthy, sustainable place to live. Because we're volunteers, leadership and membership fluctuate, along with our ability to coordinate our activities, more fully engage the public, acquire materials and expertise and pay for liability and accident insurance for our members working in the field. All these items relate to our groups capacity to carry out much-needed work in our community.

To one degree or another, nearly every stewardship group in the province faces some challenges to building capacity within their organization so it can achieve the results their community needs and desires. A good way to meet challenges is by forming partnerships.

That's why we're here today, to look at this continuing challenge of building capacity among and within stewardship groups throughout the province, and to further explore partnerships.

Stewardship, to me, means taking on the responsibilities of looking after one's home, the communities we all live in. My sincerest wish is that today's workshop will bring us closer to finding sustainable ways to support stewardship activities in all our communities.

Maggie Paquet
Vice-Chair
Stewardship Centre for British Columbia

How We Got Here: A Brief Summary Of Activities And Research

The Healthy Ecosystems Healthy People Project (HEHPP) was initiated by the Ministry of Environment's Stewardship Outreach Project, with Act Now funding, to increase the number of volunteers within the stewardship community.

HEHPP conducted the following research:

- BC-wide phone survey about volunteering
- Literature review of volunteering with stewardship organizations
- Stewardship organizations member survey
- Phone survey with 81 stewardship organizations

The HEHPP research found that stewardship groups want and need more volunteers to carry out their activities, but they lack the capacity to manage and recruit more volunteers. The biggest barrier to building capacity is core funding¹.

The Stewardship Centre for BC was one of many partners invited to participate in the project committee. From work on that committee, the SCBC and HEHPP formed a partnership to develop the initial *Stewardship Works!* program.

Research highlights of a literature review conducted by SCBC included:

“Designated funding for core expenses is obtained by less than a third of the groups surveyed.”

“Project funding should be accompanied or supplemented by core funding that allows for effective implementation of projects and long-term capacity-building.”

Dovetail Consulting Inc.
*Facing the Future of Stewardship
in the Lower Fraser Area, 2002.*

“Recommendation #5: Create stability for watershed stewardship groups and programs by generating long term, stable funding through diverse sources.”

Langley Environmental Partners,
Land Stewardship Centre of Canada.
*National Watershed Stewardship Report: Policy recommendations
and suggested actions to expand and strengthen
watershed stewardship in Canada, 2003*

¹ Core funding means small amounts of financial support for community-based groups to maintain and build capacity. Examples of core funding are: volunteer management, fundraising and development, liaison with partners, and office expenses.

“Lack of administration and overhead funding” – a limiting factor and challenge to stewardship groups.

The Pacific Salmon Foundation.
Pacific Salmon Foundation Survey Compilation of Aquatic Stewardship Community Questionnaire, 2006

“Confidence in this sector and recognition of the tremendous value it provides the citizens of BC needs to be demonstrated by all levels of government through various funding programs such as core funding...”

Angela Smailes. *Funding Solutions, A Funding Survey of 100 Environmental Organizations in B.C., 2004*

There has been success when funding agencies “help stabilize [organizations’] funding base, which allow[s] them to take on new, “big picture” issues and projects”

Brian Harvey and David Greer. *Reality Stewardship: Survival of the Fittest for Community Salmon Groups, 2004*

Other research studies have also recommended providing core funding to community-based stewardship groups:

- The East Kootenay Conservation Program. *The Columbia-Kootenay Public Opinion Poll, 2006*
- Stewards of the Lower Fraser. *Facing the Future of Community Stewardship in the Lower Fraser, BC, 2002*
- Alberta Ecotrust. *Maximizing Effectiveness: An Assessment of Environmental Priorities and Voluntary Sector Capacity Needs in Alberta, 2004.*

Providing stable core funding was identified as a tangible action that would have a positive impact on the stability of stewardship groups, resulting in groups being better able to effectively and efficiently deliver a variety of projects and programs. This was the genesis of the ***Stewardship Works!*** program.

Three research projects were completed to further inform its development:

- Funding Organizations Overview: a summary of funding organizations, their missions, funding criteria, eligibility, etc.
- Literature Review: review of past research and surveys on stewardship community needs.
- Funder Interviews: various funders were interviewed by Cathy Beaumont regarding their potential support for a core funding program.

Utilizing the knowledge gained from the research, the SCBC/HEHPP partnership developed the ***Stewardship Works!*** funding model to attempt to address core funding needs of

community-based stewardship groups. The intended outcomes of the **Stewardship Works!** program model are:

- Increase social and organizational capacity (health) of stewardship groups, resulting in an increase in conservation and protection of natural values
- Increase volunteer involvement in stewardship
- Recognize the contribution of local stewardship organizations
- Enable organizations to leverage additional contributions
- Evaluate stewardship effectiveness
- Demonstrate commitment to shared stewardship
- Deliver education and outreach programs

The SCBC/HEHPP partnership has secured the following investments in the **Stewardship Works!** Program to date:

Funds received for **Stewardship Works!** Program Development:

\$13,700	(Fraser Salmon and Watersheds Program)
\$21,000	(Living Rivers Trust Fund)
<u>\$15,000</u>	(Ministry of Environment)
\$49,700	

Funds received for **Stewardship Works!** Grants:

\$25,000	(Fraser Salmon and Watersheds Program)
<u>\$50,000</u>	(Ministry of Environment)
\$75,000	

The SCBC, Healthy Ecosystems Healthy People Program, and other partners have also made significant in-kind investments in the **Stewardship Works!** program.

Funder Research Summary and Insights

A number of interviews were conducted with funders and potential funders of stewardship groups in March 2007. The purpose was to find out how funders perceived the idea of core funding, what might encourage them to participate in the *Stewardship Works!* funding model and what might hold them back.

- Overall, funders understood that the lack of core funding affects the ability of groups to do stewardship work.
- There was strong support among funders for the concept of matching grants.
- Funders were in support of core funding for stewardship groups, but accountability was a concern.
- Perceived advantages of core funding included: stability and increased effectiveness; freeing up staff time; attracting volunteers; continuity for long-term projects.
- Perceived disadvantages included: possible misuse of funds, core funding not a magic bullet, return on investment, sustainability issues, could cause conflict.
- How to encourage funders: demonstrate return on investment; be clear about use of funding for advocacy; show government commitment; understand funders' internal constraints; manage expectations; bring all parties to the table to develop the funding program; find a "home" for the program.

Draft Funding Model

This is a brief summary of a draft funding model for the *Stewardship Works!* program that was provided in advance to workshop participants. The funding model is designed to build the organizational strength and capacity of community-based environmental stewardship groups.

The goal of this program will be healthier groups that will be much more successful at delivering a wide range of projects.

It aims to address the basic organizational needs of frontline partners who often provide valuable services to achieve the mandates of governments. It addresses the need for core (operational) funding at the local level—a critical barrier to the effectiveness of community-based stewardship groups. There are many sources of funding for on-the-ground environmental stewardship projects. This funding model is unique in that its goal is to build the capacity of local groups by addressing their basic organizational needs.

1. Background

Stewardship is an ethic and practice to carefully and responsibly manage natural resources and ecosystems for the benefit of current and future generations. Stewardship demonstrates a commitment by governments, communities, corporations, non-profits and individuals to voluntarily act in an environmentally, socially and economically sustainable manner.

In many ways, stewardship groups in British Columbia directly and indirectly provide invaluable services and assistance to all levels of governments.

2. Barriers to Effective Community-Based Stewardship Groups

Extensive research over the past four years that has examined the roles and status of British Columbia's stewardship community. A common theme in this research indicates that the success of stewardship groups in British Columbia is limited by their lack of capacity to attract, train and manage volunteers, coordinate their activities, and plan their projects.

Stewardship groups tend to be funded on a short-term, project-by-project basis, with core funding support sometimes coming in the form of administration expenditures. Pursuing project funds simply for the survival opportunities that flow from administration components of projects can result in stewardship groups experiencing "mission drift".

Stewardship groups are left with little or no resources to do long-term planning, properly recruit and manage volunteers, and carry out other complementary stewardship activities that

raise public awareness and support for conservation work. This lack of capacity is greatly inhibiting the effective delivery of existing stewardship projects and programs.²

Providing stable core funding was identified as a tangible action that would have a positive impact on the stability of stewardship groups, resulting in groups being better able to effectively and efficiently deliver a variety of projects and programs.

3. What is Core Funding?

Core funding is small amounts of ongoing financial support for community-based groups to maintain and build capacity (office, telephone, courier, computer, part-time contractor, production of project fund raising applications, data entry, etc.) associated with managing, training, retraining, deploying and recruiting of volunteers. These volunteers undertake a wide variety of key planning, protection, restoration, enhancement and educational activities that are associated with the stewardship of ecosystems.

4. A Funding Model to Address the Core Funding Barrier

4.1 Design

Stewardship Works! is a challenge grant program for existing local community-based stewardship groups. Groups with regional or province-wide scopes are excluded.

Grants from the ***Stewardship Works!*** Program must be matched on a 1:1 basis with cash, donated materials, volunteer labour, and other contributions. The matching contribution of the local stewardship group will need to be linked to increases in the number and effort of volunteers, the number of project applications, increases in project funds and other measurables.

Two separate but complementary granting streams are proposed for the program:

1. A three-year testing of the funding model using 15 stewardship groups working in a variety of locales, and on a variety of issues; and
2. Grants of \$100 to \$5000 to remaining stewardship groups to assist in addressing immediate capacity issues.

Sustainability issues will be addressed once the funding model has been tested. Ideally, an endowment of \$10-15 million would provide a basic level of revenue to address the need.

² Research carried out by: the Ministry of Environment, Pacific Salmon Foundation, East Kootenay Conservation Program, Stewards of the Lower Fraser, Leading Edge Conference, National Watershed Stewardship Coalition, Pacific Fisheries Resource Conservation Council, and the Finding Solutions Network all have solid research data that document these stewardship group issues.

4.2 Testing the Design of the Funding Model

The core funding initiative will be a three year pilot program. It is being designed to ensure that effective evaluation and monitoring of results will occur, and that the efficacy of the program can be determined at the end of three years.

Fifteen stewardship groups will be chosen to test the funding model after careful screening based on criteria that are under development.

- Groups will be diverse in size, type of work and area of interest.
- Baseline data on the organization and its past and current projects will be collected.
- There will be three levels of annual challenge grants: Five grants each at the \$5K, \$10K and \$15K levels.
- Grants will be for three years, and will be subject to annual review.
- There will be a requirement to submit organizational and project data.

4.3 Immediate Support for Remaining Stewardship Groups

Continued survival of stewardship groups is an ongoing challenge. In order for stewardship organizations to continue building capacity within their organizations, and for them to remain effective, it is imperative to begin providing core funding to those groups who are not part of the pilot program.

It is proposed that challenge grants of \$100-\$5000 be made subject to available funding. Local groups receiving such monies will be required to report organizational and project data, but not at the same detail as the groups in the 3 year funding model testing component.

4.4 Selection of Grant Recipients

A small committee comprised of representatives of the following groups will be responsible for selecting grant recipients: SCBC Directors (both non government and government affiliations), funders and broad stewardship interests.

Funds from funders that have specific requirements, such as support for particular types of activities, groups, regions, or watersheds, will be matched to groups that meet the funders' requirements.

5. Performance Management Framework

Evaluation is a key component of the three-year testing phase of the ***Stewardship Works!*** challenge grant program. This evaluation will provide assurances to funding contributors that the money they provide is achieving the environmental outcomes they desire.

The Ministry of Environment's Healthy Ecosystems Healthy People ActNow Project is assisting with the development of an evaluation and monitoring program. Rick Kool, a Royal Roads University professor, and his graduate students are assisting with the development of this monitoring and evaluation of stewardship groups.

SCBC will need to retain adequate resources to administer the grants and assist in the analysis of data.

5.1 Database System

A **Stewardship Works!** database module would be added to the existing Stewardship Centre database and would underlay all of the **Stewardship Works!** processes. This would be a secure integrated end-to-end system that would be used for: screening of groups; grant rationale and details; tracking of funds; reporting; outcome reporting; and program evaluation.

Features of the system:

- Stewardship groups would register on the system, creating a profile that would be saved and that they could update at any time. This would make it easier for the groups to reapply for funds, and would also give SCBC valuable information on the groups that do not receive funds.
- Applications could be sorted based on various factors such as region, community, activity, etc. so that funds could be distributed according to the criteria.
- Applications would be reviewed by the program review committee online to increase efficiency and reduce overhead costs associated with managing the review process.
- All stewardship group reporting would occur online, and this information would be rolled up into an annual report.
- The data collected would allow for the assessment of the efficacy of the challenge grant by evaluating whether objectives are being met, and what improvements should be made to the program to help it operate more effectively and efficiently.
- Other funders would be invited to use this software for their application and reporting processes.

5.2 StewardshipWorks.bc.ca

The online home for this program would be the **Stewardship Works!** website, a community of interest website that is hosted by the Stewardship Centre for BC at www.StewardshipWorks.bc.ca.

General Workshop Discussion on the Draft Funding Model

Q1: What is the timeframe for creating an endowment fund?

An endowment fund would be created after a three-year testing period when consensus on the type of core funding has been reached.

Q2: How long would the core-funding application be?

Currently the thinking is to front-end load the funding, and tail it off, or have smaller grants when needed. The answer would also be dependent on reporting criteria to the funding group. Five to 10 years is a number that is being advocated by new models of funding in the US.

Q3: Is there a common vision of the 15 groups in the test?

It would be ideal to get some geographical representation and a mix of activities.

Q4: How will you cap the number of organizations funded in the test?

There will be three levels of funding: \$5K, \$10K or \$15K. Organizations with immediate needs could receive funding ranging from \$100-\$5000.

Q5: Are there other provincial models?

- We are familiar with Ontario Government model of Stewardship Councils, however, the funds are used for coordination of private land issues. BC's needs are more diverse than that, and want to focus on the grassroots-based groups.
- Core funding would allow groups to do what they truly want to do about capacity issues rather than apply for grants for large projects to get a small amount of money to attempt to deal with organizational capacity issues.
- Core funding is often obtained through project administration fees, and many groups receive these.

Q6: For the startup phase, how much say does the contributing funder have in where the funds go?

There would likely be funding pots within the *Stewardship Works!* program that would reflect the needs of individual funders.

Q7: How comfortable are funders with the idea of core funding?

- Boards recognize that there are unavoidable overhead costs, but these costs are addressed with administration costs attached to the project. Funders do expect a detailed application to meet reporting guidelines.
- Seed funding is also another mechanism that can be employed to help develop good project proposals, which is a much shorter application process, and does not require as much time.

- Time taken to fill in funding proposals is not covered by project administration costs.
- Funding needs to be tied to performance, and continued funding would be contingent on that.
- Government recognizes that they need stewards and that the work can't be done by itself. A United Way model could provide opportunity to continue funding. Pilot **Stewardship Works!** projects could be delivered on the basis of drivers and issues, rather than stratification by funding amounts.
- The pilot phase could take into account the issues that are important to governments.
- Funders that are connected to organizations within the community acknowledge administration costs are important, however they are ambivalent about money as the only way of supporting groups. What other things need to happen within the organizations, e.g. leadership, volunteer retention? For funders, these are not necessarily needs that can best be met with money.
- Funders can help with capacity building.
- There is a risk that core funding breeds dependence.
- How would we acknowledge the issue of reach and membership? Governments may be reluctant to fund a group if there is a small reach, or a small membership. Funding should help to build organizational capacity rather than dependence.
- Ottawa's international programming is now determining that 20% of funding for a project is for administration costs rather than going through a financial audit, which becomes cumbersome. This model can also be examined by the environment sector.

Input On The Draft Model

Participants divided into four groups, where they discussed one of four themes: governance and administration, eligibility and application, core activities and reporting and evaluation. Over the course of the session, they were able to discuss all four themes by rotating through four tables. Each group of 5-7 participants had 20 minutes at each table.

The following notes summarize the brainstorming, comments, advice, and discussions at the four tables. These comments will be considered while revising and testing the final model.

Table 1: Governance and Administration

What type of program oversight is required?

- There are three components to managing this program: program administration, fund administration and a technical committee.
- Program administration should utilize an existing host organization with broad geographical representation; grass roots representation, a diverse mix of rural and urban representatives, and incorporates all stewardship sectors.
- The skill set of the host organization(s) should be broad.
- The SCBC was seen to be well-placed to serve as the program administrator.
- There is a potential for real or perceived conflict of interest with organizations who have a representative sit on the SCBC Board of Directors. There must be a policy in place to deal with this.
- Fund administration should be by a credible organization outside of government with a strong history of investment management.
- It may be advisable to determine the role of the fund administrator, and prepare a Request for Proposals. This would enable a very open, transparent process.
- The Vancouver Foundation was suggested as a possible candidate for fund administrator.
- It would be important that revenue generated from fund investments be re-invested in the fund.
- Regional scale of administration was discussed, but felt there would be too much duplicate administration.

Should there be a steering committee, advisory group, or something similar?

- A large technical committee (granting committee) may be necessary to make decisions about fund distribution.
- Funders and stewardship organizations may sit on this committee.
- The committee should have a revolving membership with mentorship.
- There should be separate project/ core funding decision makers.

- Some funders indicated that they would not wish to sit on this committee, as they would already be making decisions about project funds, and this may be a conflict. Instead, they felt an advisory role was more appropriate.
- Creating a dependency is not a desired result. Therefore the following were suggested:
 - Emphasize that long-term funding was not guaranteed.
 - Recipients should rotate.

How can the program attract long term funding commitments from funders?

- Enable year-end contributions to an endowment fund from government organizations.
- Demonstrate that an exit plan is in place, so that we are not creating dependencies on this funding source.
- It is important to stay true to original intent of the program – be cautious of bending the program to meet funder needs.
- Take advantage of current political climate and growing awareness of environmental issues to develop partnerships with new organizations.
- Build community support.
- Part of all funds raised could go to a stewardship endowment that may eventually be self sufficient.
- Look to US/ Canadian foundations to participate in *Stewardship Works!*

What will give the funders confidence that their money is being used/managed responsibly? What is the best way to ensure that the program meets the needs of funders with different priorities or objectives?

- Meeting funder mandate, which may not be organizational health.
- One year grants promote accountability and complete reporting. Multiple year grants tend to promote lack of reporting and may lead to straying from the original intent.
- Three year commitment with an annual reporting and review.
- Audit function must be performed.
- Funders may be able to assist with ideas/support.
- Depreciating contributions.
- Key funders may be able to provide staff to administer or audit or mentor.

What should the granting cycle look like? What is the best time of year to distribute funds?

- Enable funds to be carried forward through the funding year.
- Directed approach to funding may be preferred to eliminate the need for an open call for proposals.
- Be sensitive to the groups' fiscal year ends, instead of government year end.
- Stewards appreciate funding that will bridge them through spring (receipt by April 1). This may require proposals to be submitted in the fall.

- 30% (or more) of the grant should be distributed up front.

Other Discussion

- This fund should emphasize capacity building and organizational health, instead of core funding which may have negative connotations associated with it.
- Key issue: groups' sustainability
- Core funding is one of the components of the solution.
- Need stated objectives: what is the organization's health? Define.
- May choose to direct funds in geographic/ strategic location.
- Vancity model: provide one large award annually; this creates great interest and profile.

Input On The Draft Model: Table 2: Eligibility and Application

What Should Determine Eligibility?

Information about the group:

- Years established as a group.
- Groups in existence under the designated time threshold e.g. “new” groups could be eligible for small amounts of money Funds awarded to these groups would be capped at a certain amount (\$500?).
- Experience of the people in the group’s leadership and staff.
- The group’s linkages to other groups and processes; group is involved in collaborative projects/processes.
- Vision statement of the organization and its track record (group needs to be able to show it is healthy and has strengths and a plan).
- Detailed organizational assessment, including risk assessment; plan for use of the requested funds; what work does it support; group’s long term plans (25 years).

How funding will be used:

- Term of work undertaken or needed (long, medium or short term).
- Volunteer capacity of the group and whether the funds will be used to build a volunteer base.
- Collaboration is important but it should be a bonus not a requirement.
- Quality of the volunteer opportunities created (e.g. personal opportunity to make a difference (value for time) or the work will move the conservation/stewardship agenda forward.
- Environmental impact: tie to larger or longer term issues.
- Planned work fits with larger strategic plans on a regional/local scale.
- Community-building: the work builds community capacity beyond the group.
- Consider establishing thematic areas for funding: education; strategic planning; habitat and/or species restoration; water conservation.

Matching Funds: What Contributions Are Acceptable?

- Contributions require a weighting factor
 - Time
 - Money
 - Materials
 - Numbers of volunteers
 - Previous phases of a project, if the work is directly linked
 - Whether the project leverages the work of planning processes—this would need to be refined/defined.

What Type of Application is Required?

- Wildlife Habitat Canada can provide details on an online marketplace event approach used in Ontario. Its strength is that the marketplace replaces a lot of administration. A group registers, details the scale and scope of its needs and the foundations then decide on an individual basis which organizations fit their needs.
- Standardized approach like a checklist.
- In the beginning specific goals need to be targeted.
- Checklist vs. Letter of Interest approach: checklist lends itself to the idea of matching funders to seekers; letter of interest seems more related to project proposals.
- Simple and fast—application should take about 15 minutes to complete.
- Online aspect was an important discussion—online idea is OK but it MUST WORK, and the fund must realize that.
- Application needs to be linked with evaluation and investment areas.
- Letters of support are needed to link in with the idea of the uses meeting community needs/community building/regional priorities.
- To help streamline the process: have pre-approved or identified local community endorsers.

Is the Proposed Database the Way to Go?

- Database idea is OK but it must work.
- Database needs an administrator attached to it otherwise it will fail. There needs to be direct and instantaneous communication with the system. People are skeptical based on their experiences with systems to date.
- Idea that you can replace administration with technology is OK to a point. Personal follow-up is necessary.
- Need a system where backup documentation can be added.
- Idea surfaced that the database could act as a resumé for groups.
- Cost of establishing a database system was questioned versus having a networked approach to core or a capacity building funding program that each participating funding organization operated as an adjunct to their existing project funding systems.

Input On The Draft Model:

Table 3: Core Activities

What Are Core Funding Expenditures?

- Staff (contract)
- Office/materials/storage/mailing and shipping
- Telephone
- Computer
- Legal/insurance
- Maintenance
- Travel for core activities/per diems

What are OK Core Funding Activities to Build Capacity?

- Volunteer management: the internal and external aspects of training, retraining, deploying, recruiting and retaining volunteers.
- Data entry-keeping track of volunteer time, finances etc.
- Project application writing-promoting the NGO to funders.
- Reporting/outreach/education/web (about NGO).
- Representation at events, meeting etc.
- Strategic planning: vision, goals, and objectives of the NGO.
- Financial audits.
- Building broad community presence and membership.

What Are Not OK Core Activities?

- Project responsibilities

How Do We Deal With Public Policy Advocacy?

- Apply guidelines from the Canada Revenue Agency for charitable NGOs to all NGOs (a maximum of 10% of resources can be used annually for political activities; public awareness and meeting with elected officials are not considered political activities).
- Concentrate on education and public awareness.
- Define advocacy so that NGOs can keep track of their activities.

What are the Potential Conflicts Between Project and Core Funding? How do we deal with them?

- Core funding allows NGOs to develop better projects (be more efficient and effective).
- Hopefully, NGOs become self sustaining with core funding assistance to build capacity.
- Currently, core funding is usually part of project funding (project money for project administration is being used for core funding activities).

- There is an imbalance: there is an abundance of project funding on an annual basis; there is little core funding and that is usually on a short term or restricted basis.
- Because of this imbalance, mission drift can be a problem: project monies may be dragging NGO's away from their mission.
- A risk of the ***Stewardship Works!*** model is that core funding could be used for project expenses at the expense of building capacity.
- The goal is healthy NGOs efficiently delivering projects.
- There are objectives for core funding:
 - Capacity: improve health of NGOs
 - Quality and number of projects: have a broader influence
 - Broadening constituency
 - Accountable to core funder
- There are objectives for project funding:
 - Limited to one area
 - Limited to one topic
 - Specific outcomes
 - Accountable to project funder
- There is some overlap in these objectives and in accountabilities. The challenge is to keep core funding and project accountabilities separate.

How do we Satisfy Funders That Need to be Committed to Certain Activities, Groups, Regions, or Watersheds?

- A United Way type of model was suggested to provide a brokerage service to link funders who wish to provide core funding support with NGOs who require core funding support. This may require several themes or funding envelopes (to be determined with input from funders and NGOs).
- Funders will always have projects.

Input On The Draft Model:

Table 4: Reporting and Evaluation

How can funders be satisfied that the outcomes of core funding meet their objectives or goals?

Clear indicators of growth of organizational capacity e.g. membership, projects, retention

- Could use pre-existing organization assessment tools
 - Do initial assessment, then re-evaluate
- What can you achieve over three years of funding to build capacity?
 - Development
 - Regional coordination or resources
 - Building plans and supporting that plan
- Is core funding helping volunteers stay? Measure health of volunteers.

Build on successes and tie it into promotion

- Have generic qualitative component to evaluate groups where groups evaluate themselves - lessons learned.
- Need to tell the story of the group.
- Use reporting for media or other reports.
- Have media contact as part of evaluation.
- Reporting to media can feed back to success of group.
- Use signage for promotion.
- Get on website.
- Have funders look at projects.

Have themes for funding (United Way model) so funders would be contributing to investment areas

- Have indicators for each theme.
- These thematic indicators would reflect reporting needs of funders with specific environmental mandates.

Mentor and supporting key people:

- Succession planning
- Resources for skill development
- Supporting specific expertise to help groups
- Want to encourage entrepreneurship

What documentation is required of grant recipients?

Outcomes of core funding may be long-term but the nature of monitoring required to measure is short-term

- Increase in capacity has different objectives than project funds, and therefore need to measure success differently.
- Get funders to support broader objectives and not micro-manage the funds.
- Could develop indicators for each of the different activities e.g. volunteer coordination (how many volunteers, how many activities).
- Evaluation framework needs to focus on objectives:
 - Quality of projects
 - Better groups
- Would measure:
 - Engagement–broad based support
 - Growing capacity–leveraging other support and influence

How do we measure results? How do we demonstrate increase in environmental outcomes?

Standardize reporting across all funders to make it less work for groups to report

- Have a score-card approach to evaluation to make it easier.
- Focus on the core information that funders really need to fulfill their requirements.

Ultimate goal of core funding is healthy ecosystems and healthy communities

- Develop indicators to measure healthy ecosystems and healthy communities.
- Have general agreement among all parties involved what these indicators are.
- Developing and measuring ecosystem and community indicators should not be the job of stewardship groups to measure.
- Groups would measure how they are influencing these indicators.
- Maybe it needs to be based on sustainability, not necessarily growth.
- Could have outside agencies do qualitative analysis of the group e.g. community advisors.

Appendix A

Workshop Participants

Al Martin	Living Rivers Trust Fund
Alan Moyes	Ministry of Environment
Andrew MacDonald	BC Hydro
Blair Hammond	Environment Canada
Brian Clark	Ministry of Environment
Brian Springinotic	Habitat Conservation Trust Fund
Carol Cornish	Parksville Streamkeepers
Cathy Beaumont	Facilitator
Celina Owens	Real Estate Foundation of BC
Coral deShield	Fraser Basin Council
Dawn Deydey	Elk Valley Stewardship Centre
Deborah Gibson	BC Conservation Foundation
Edwin Hubert	Ministry of Environment
Eva Cheung Robinson	Vancouver Foundation
Faye Smith	Mid Vancouver Island Habitat Enhancement Society
Greg Mallette	Fisheries and Oceans Canada
Gretchen Harlow	Environment Canada
Jim Shinkewski	Pacific Salmon Foundation
Joan Carne	Byrne Creek Streamkeepers
Katherine Dunster	Land Trust Alliance
Kin Mak	Environment Canada
Lonnie Prouse	Langley Environmental Partners Society
Lynn McIntyre	Wildlife Habitat Canada
Maggie Paquet	Stewardship Centre for BC
Marc Saunders	Pacific Salmon Foundation
Naomi Tabata	Stewardship Centre for BC
Nichole Marples	Langley Environmental Partners
Peter Abrams	Stewardship Centre for BC
Rod Silver	Stewardship Centre for BC
Sylvia von Schuckmann	Ministry of Environment
Tim Pringle	The Real Estate Foundation of BC
Tracy Bond	Baker Creek Enhancement Society
Zo Ann Morten	Pacific Steamkeepers Federation

Appendix B

Workshop Expectations and Evaluations

Expectations from workshop participants:

- Take back ideas to share with group
- Explore other possible solutions; not just money
- Find support for groups
- Find out what other people are thinking
- Continue discussion and get on the same page
- Learn more about the **Stewardship Works!** program
- Bring solutions back to organization
- Find agreement on moving model forwards
- Sustainable shared stewardship
- Improve capacity for partnership.

Worked well in the workshop:

- Like revolving table concept
- Half day
- Next steps fast turn around.
- NGO's from around the province
- Prep materials well organized
- Bringing funders and NGO's together in the same room
- Size and diversity were an asset.
- Respectful of opinions

What to do differently next time:

- Work with different people from different groups
- Step back from core-funding as the main purpose. What do we really need to move on?

Appendix C

Additional Comments on the Funding Model

Nikki Wright, Executive Director, SeaChange Marine Conservation Society (personal communication)

1. If the goal is to increase capacity of stewardship groups (and not work on administration) in order for them to protect and conserve the natural world, then it is crucial that the burden already felt by many not be made heavier by lengthy application and reporting processes. Reputation for past and present track record for accountability and project results should be part of the mix for choosing groups. Simple on-line reporting is a good idea. Perhaps phone interviews could be part of the reporting, with a real live interaction between group and funder. I suggest evaluations be done interpersonally, not written or online, with individuals and in groups.

2. I am unclear from the draft document who has been part of the design making. Group reps from the stewardship sectors should be part of the design and implementation of the pilot. The timing, for example, of this workshop is poor for most groups, as spring and summer tend to be the busiest times of the year, so already there may be a reflection that groups' input is not part of the design. Because most groups are already running at over the top capacity, any time they spend on meetings is unpaid and takes a whole day to attend. If conference calls and written communication on the web and email could be part of the process, more feedback from the sector may be possible.

3. Many groups have all three spheres of influence - local, regional and province-wide. Criteria for funding for different groups' size and range of projects is tricky. Some small groups have a wide range of influence.

4. Money must be allowed for coordination itself. I am not sure the category of "part-time contractor" is what is meant by that role. Long term "funding fatigue" sets in for EDs and staff when most of the funding is now cut by 50-70%, which translates as double the workload for project funding applications for half the amount of results on the ground. Staff members are feeling the crunch and fatigue fallout, but the natural environment is ultimately suffering. Groups need the core funding to go where the most need is within the organization to keep the projects healthy and relevant. Group staff should have ultimate decision making powers on this one.

Owen Williams, Stewardship Liaison, Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (personal communication)

1. Comments on the Introduction:

Insert statements about the environmental need, state of resources, expected increase in challenges relative to the current capacity to respond.

Alternative wording? The goal of this funding is to temporarily support the core capacity of some organizations to deliver key strategic services, with the intent that for some of these organizations the funding will enable them to sustain this higher level of activity. Assessment of the impact of this funding could lead to a larger initiative that would dramatically improve the implementation and achievement of outcomes that are important to the Governments' environmental mandates.

Your final sentence in the paragraph is OK for audiences that appreciate a soft sell, but if your audience is harder nosed folks – i.e. the government department that you want support this – they should want a clearer, business attitude.

2. Comments on Background:

.....ecosystems” (a.k.a. biodiversity) This is assuming the BC government is embracing the biodiversity effort] for the benefit of current and future generations.

3. Comments on Barriers to Effective Community-Based m Stewardship Groups

Add: Mission drift reduces the image of being well led, reduces the relevance of their achievements to their goals, and damages their credibility with investors and members.

Add: The provincial government has the mandate to be aware of the status of and threats to environmental sustainability. It is in a position to identify priorities for action. This funding provides the Government with the opportunity to positively influence organizations and their associated partners and investors, to address these priorities.

Add a section 2 B How this program will remove the barriers

- ... provide concise descriptions of what will be done, e.g.:
- environmental stewardship organizations (you might want to be more specific, even indicate the potential number of organizations), will be invited to submit proposals in response to the specific criteria for funding;
- applicants will be screened using a defensible process that will be documented for future reference; they will be notified and successful applicants will be notified of the conditions placed on their funding (e.g. contract that clarifies expectations, including reporting and subsequent review);

- the funds and the assessment process will:
 - identify the key constraint faced by each organization
 - provide adequate funding to potentially make a tangible removal of that barrier
- program leaders will stay in touch with each organization during the program to monitor progress and offer some advice
- leaders of the program and the funded organization will assess the value of the funding
- a report will be prepared at the end of this program to identify what worked and what did not and make recommendations for the future.

Add a new section 2 C :Outcomes of this program

There will be immediate impact of the funding:

- removal of capacity barriers for XX number of organizations
- increased output from these organizations in areas that are of importance to the government
- a report that assesses the value of this approach

There will be some longer term impacts:

- this boost will get some organizations to a higher level of capacity and they will be able to sustain it
- the program final report will give the government and the stewardship community advice regarding future policy and program designs

Add to “What is Core Funding?”: It is also seen, in most cases, to be seed funding for a limited time, that will enable organizations to raise their achievement and profile to the point that investment from the community makes them sustainable.

4. Comments on the Funding Model: Design, Testing Etc

Have you or the government department, already analyzed and discounted the benefits of a delivery via a coalition of regional/provincial organizations? It seems to me that this could more efficiently be done by increasing the core capacity of these higher level organizations to influence their member and affiliated organizations at the local level.

“Grants from the **Stewardship Works!** program must be matched on at least a 1:1 basis with cash, donated materials, volunteer labour, and other contributions”. [Note – you will need a table of standard values for these contributions.]

“Sustainability issues will be addressed once the funding model has been tested. Ideally, an endowment of \$10-15 million would provide a basic level of revenue to address the need.” The **Stewardship Works!** Board will also seek to lever the government investment by seeking matching donations?

“There will be 3 levels of annual challenge grants: Five grants each at the \$5K, \$10K and \$15K level”. NOTE: these are such small amounts, I wonder if you will be able to prove the impact of the investment.

“Continued survival of stewardship groups is an ongoing challenge. In order for stewardship organizations to continue building capacity within their organizations, and for them to remain effective, it is *imperative* to begin providing core funding to those groups who are not part of the pilot program.” [...so what is the purpose of this pilot program, if not to prove the value of the investment? Why is it imperative to start funding other organizations before proving the value of the investment?]

5. Comments on Performance Management Framework

NOTE: the online system is possible. We are currently building such a system for Ontario. It has been a full year in development and we expect to have organizations entering data this fall.