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# *CHARTING OUR WATER FUTURE*

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*Overview of Workshop Results*

*December 2004*

Prepared for Nicola Watershed Community Round Table  
Prepared by Urban Systems Ltd.  
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The **Charting Our Future Water** workshop formed part of the Nicola Watershed Management Strategy: Phase 1 project undertaken by the Nicola Stockbreeders Association.

The workshop was made possible through the sponsorship of the



**Ministry of  
Water, Land  
and  
Air Protection**



**BC-Canada Water  
Expansion Program**

**City of  
Merritt**

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# Introduction

The Nicola Stock Breeders Association has taken the initiative to launch the preparation of a strategic water use and management plan for the Nicola Basin. See Figure 1. The plan will be prepared in two phases. The first phase will include collecting all relevant information and data, summarizing the information in a useful format, identifying knowledge gaps, identifying and prioritizing the issues and developing support for the planning process. The second phase of the process will result in the development of a strategic water use management plan with broad community and stakeholder participation.

Early on in the stakeholder participation process, it was decided that the Nicola Watershed Community Round Table (NWCRT) would host a public workshop at the end of the first phase of the study. This workshop was intended to provide direction on how the important water resources of the Nicola Basin will be managed in the future.

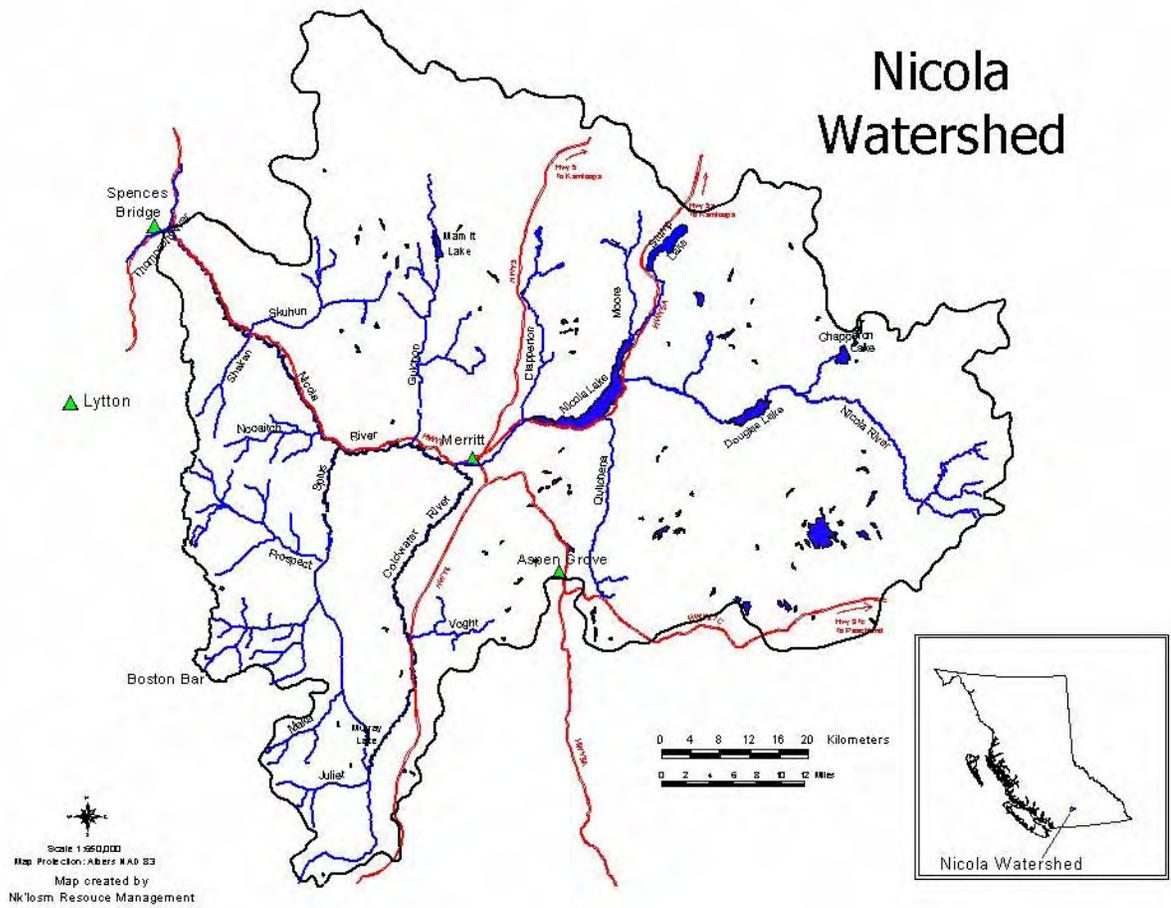
This two day workshop was held on October 14 and 15, 2004 at the Civic Centre in Merritt. The workshop served to:

- Provide an opportunity for all stakeholders to become involved in the process and to become aware of the characteristics and potential issues facing the Nicola Basin and the watersheds within it.
- Identify gaps in the science and knowledge of the basin that will need to be addressed to ensure more effective management of the water resources within the basin and permit the preparation of an effective water use plan.
- Enable participants to work toward a consensus on a broad vision and goals for managing water within the basin.
- Allow participants to define the scope and required content of a water use management plan as well as defining the process to be followed in the preparation of the plan.
- Discuss possible governance models to ensure that the water use management plan can be implemented and monitored to ensure that the goals set out in the plan were met.



*“The workshop was intended to provide direction on how the important water resources of the Nicola Basin will be managed and used in the future”*

Figure 1



## Merritt, BC • Charting our Water Future

The workshop took place over a two-day period. The first day was devoted to hearing various presentations which described the basin from various perspectives and allowed various groups and industries that have an interest in the watershed to be heard. The presentations included:

- Geological history of the Nicola Basin including groundwater.
- Natural processes within the basin.
- Ecological processes within the basin with a focus on the fisheries resource.
- The First Nations perspective.
- Discussion of how various industries use and manage water resources.
- Existing water use and requirements within the basin.
- Existing water availability/water balance.

The titles of the presentations made and how to access them is provided in Appendix A.

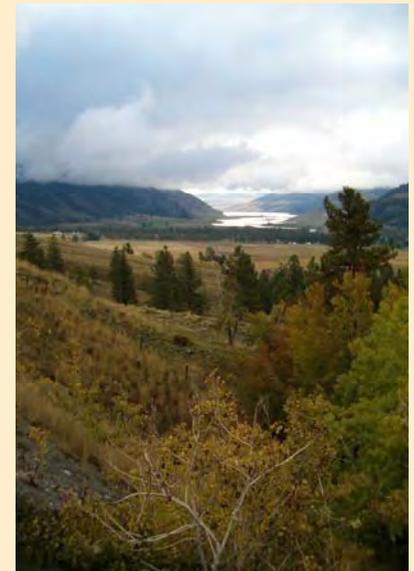
The second day was devoted to:

- identifying and prioritizing issues;
- developing a broad vision and goals;
- identifying the gaps in the information and knowledge necessary to effectively manage the water resources of the basin;
- obtaining support for developing a water use management plan and identifying the desired scope and content; and
- establishing a framework to enable the various stakeholders to work together in implementing and monitoring the effectiveness of the plan.

The workshop was hosted by the NWCRT and supported financially and logistically by the BC Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection, Canada BC Water Supply Expansion Program, the City of Merritt, Urban Systems Ltd. and other organizations.

Approximately 150 people attended the first day of the workshop and about 70 people attended the second day. Workshop attendees included representatives from various industries, the agricultural community, local government, First Nations, Provincial and Federal Government agencies, the NWCRT, community based organizations and citizens. Individuals who attended the workshop are noted in Appendix B.

This document summarizes the outcome of the second day of the workshop.



*"Approximately 150 people attended the first day of the workshop including representatives from various industries, the agricultural community, local government, First Nations, Provincial and Federal Government agencies, the NWCRT, community based organizations and citizens."*

# *What are the issues within the Nicola Basin?*

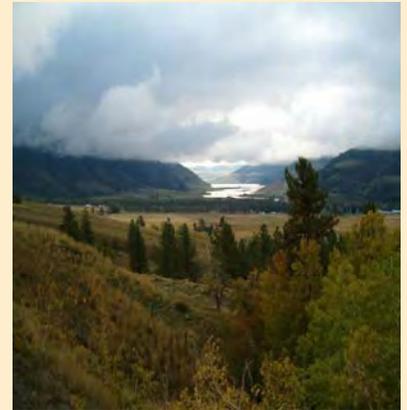
Workshop participants were asked to identify the most pressing water management issues within the Nicola Basin and to prioritize them.

## **Water Supply**

The question of whether there would be an adequate supply of water to sustain existing and projected future uses within the basin was one of the issues most frequently cited by the workshop participants. Concerns were expressed that the potential supply and availability of water from both surface and groundwater sources is largely unknown and requires further investigation. The issue of climate change and its impact on the supply of water was also raised. Climate change was identified as impacting both the supply of water available as well as serving to increase the demand for water due to an earlier peak flow as well as a longer dry season. It was felt that the time for action was now. Another issue was the possibility of inter basin diversions given the increasing water supply issues within the Okanagan Valley as well as the other basins surrounding the Nicola basin.

The growing attractiveness of the Nicola Basin for various types of development, most notably, recreation-based residential and commercial development, was also identified as an issue as development will place additional pressure on the water resources of the basin. In fact, the increased demand due to this type of growth could serve to increase the conflicts between in-stream (e.g. fish) and off-stream (e.g. domestic consumption) users and could change how water is allocated within the basin. The question of how water will be allocated in the future was identified as a growing concern given the pressure to accommodate future growth, to protect the interests of existing users and the fishery resource. Security of supply was viewed as a major concern for established industries such as agriculture.

A related issue to water availability identified during the course of the workshop was the need for increased storage.



## *Water Supply Issues*

- *Adequate supply*
- *Impact of climate change*
- *Inter basin diversions*
- *Growth of development within the basin*
- *Conflicts between in stream and off stream uses*
- *Allocation of water*
- *Protection of fishery resource*

## *Water Quality Issues*

- *Desire for clean, high quality water*
- *Impact of development*
- *Impact of land fills*
- *Rising water temperatures*

### **Water Quality**

Water quality was also identified as an important issue. Workshop participants expressed the desire to maintain clean, high water quality free of contaminants and suitable for the intended uses. Concern was expressed over the potential for increased residential and other forms of development around the basin's water bodies and courses to impact water quality. The issue of major landfill developments on water quality was also raised as was the impact of increasing water temperatures on fish.

### **Lack of Information, Data and Monitoring**

There was a general consensus among workshop participants that a better understanding of the basin is required. In particular, a better understanding of supply, storage and redistribution is required. There is also a need for more information concerning the groundwater resources of the basin including the location of aquifers and the potential supply of groundwater. Increased monitoring of stream flows and water quality is also required.

### **Water Management Plan Required**

A basin-wide plan was prepared in 1980's. Since that time, no basin-wide planning has been undertaken. Participants at the workshop stressed the need for a basin-wide water use management plan to help guide future decisions concerning the basin. They also stressed the need for all stakeholders to be involved in the planning process.

### **Demand Management**

Participants felt that not enough effort had been devoted to managing the demand for water within the basin. Demand management efforts need to be improved.

### **Governance**

Workshop participants were united in their view that the local community must have control and be empowered to make decisions concerning the management of water within the basin recognizing the continuing important regulatory role of government agencies. The participants believed that the whole community should be involved and consulted. In particular, the group identified the importance of First Nations communities being involved in the decision-making process.

### **Education**

It was felt that there is a need to educate new residents who are moving into the Nicola basin on the importance of water stewardship. Participants also indicated that various agencies whose decisions impact on water use should be educated on the impact of development on water use and management.



### *Other Issues*

- *Lack of information, data and monitoring*
- *Water management plan required*
- *Demand management required*
- *Local control and empowerment for decision making*
- *Education of new residents and agencies*

## *Vision for the future*

Workshop participants were asked to develop a vision for the future of the Nicola Basin. A review of the vision statements indicates many common elements which include:

- The need for a water use management plan with local involvement which addresses water and land use in an integrated fashion.
- The importance of empowering the local community to make decisions concerning the future management of water resources within the basin.
- The management of water in a manner that provides for a sustainable future.
- The equitable allocation of water.
- The protection of values which are already enjoyed by the community.
- The protection of existing uses and the overall character of the Nicola Basin.

The various vision statements developed by the participants are summarized below:

"To prepare and adopt a comprehensive plan which will enable the equitable and sustainable allocation of water throughout the watershed. Such a plan will be community-driven and its implementation monitored to ensure that the goals are achieved. The plan will ensure a healthy, vibrant and "lusty" life for all residents and communities."

"That Provincial and Federal agencies, the local agricultural industry and the community as a whole will work together to develop a water use management plan that meets the shared needs of users in a sustainable way and that provides for a balanced use of surface and groundwater. To ensure sustainability, the amount and type of development within the Nicola Basin must be managed."

"To develop and sustain a flourishing community and society which sustain existing settlement, agricultural activities and other natural resource uses and values. The local community will have a major input into water management decision-making."

"To coordinate a healthy, sustainable watershed which is managed by the local community and to act now to deal with immediate and emerging conflicts by establishing a community group and developing a water use management plan."

"To fully implement a holistic roadmap with buy-in from all parties for a sustainable approach to water use and management, including the protection of riparian corridors, sustaining a healthy ecosystem from



### *Vision*

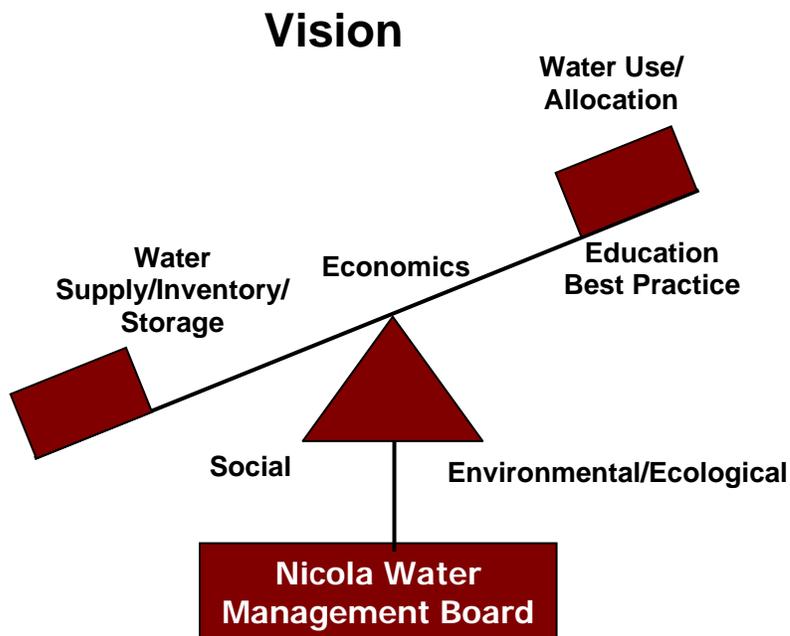
- *Need for management plan*
- *An empowered local community*
- *A sustainable future*
- *Equitable allocation of water*
- *Protection of values*
- *Protection of existing uses*

source to mouth, and a land use plan in which the management of settlement is consistent with the values of environmental integrity. Decisions regarding the implementation of the plan would be governed by a local water board."

"To protect and enhance all of the values the community already enjoys through the preparation of a comprehensive water use management plan tied to the supply and inventory of water. Local community involvement would be through the community roundtable with appropriate funding raised through property taxation."

"To implement a local water use management plan based on principles which all user groups need to respect. Such a plan would address the current and future water needs of the community, the management of water and provide for the enforcement of the plan's policies and requirements. The community would be empowered, through an elected or appointed board, to oversee the implementation of the plan."

One group at the workshop expressed its vision graphically:



**Community:**

- Healthy
- Economically Vibrant
- Environmentally Sustainable
- Strategically Planned



*"To prepare and adopt a comprehensive plan which will enable the equitable and sustainable allocation of water throughout the watershed."*

# Goals

In addition to preparing a vision statement, participants were also asked to identify goals for the future of the Nicola Basin. The goals established by the participants fell into eight categories:

- preparation of plans;
- developing a suitable information base for management;
- ensuring that water supply is a major factor in approval of future development;
- water conservation;
- protection of riparian areas;
- establishing a strong, diversified economy;
- establishing a local water management authority;
- protection of existing values.

The goals identified by the workshop participants were as follows.

## **Preparation of Plans**

To develop a strategic plan to address water management, governance and sustainable use of water and encourage all residents and communities to be involved in the preparation of the plan. The planning process would be led by a nucleus from within the community.

To ensure that management plans are implemented including monitoring, enforcement and to ensure that plans are re-evaluated and changed as necessary to reflect changing circumstances.

To encourage various interests including fisheries, agriculture, residents and First Nations to work together in the preparation of a water use management plan framework that reflects shared values and the coexistence of various land uses in a sustainable manner.

To obtain the commitment of existing and future governments to honour a community supported water plan for the Nicola Basin.

To prepare a water use management plan for the Nicola Basin addressing water storage and water quality issues and with the flexibility to address new issues which may arise in the future.

To develop a water storage facilities and storage plan based on the integrated goals of First Nations, agriculture, fisheries and urban residents with costs and liabilities shared between users and the government agencies.

To review and update the previously prepared Nicola Basin strategic water management plan.

*Workshop participants identified various goals to guide the future management of water resources within the Nicola Basin.*

To secure funding to prepare and implement a water use management plan for the Nicola Basin.

#### **Developing A Suitable Information Base For Management**

To develop a comprehensive information and education base that addresses issues of water supply, demand and use.

To better understand the water supply of the Nicola Basin and its allocation.

#### **Ensuring That Water Supply Is A Major Factor In The Approval of Future Development**

To ensure that water availability is a determining factor in present and future growth planning for the basin.

To ensure that planning, development approvals and zoning are based on water use and availability in the Nicola Basin.

To ensure that water availability is a determining factor in assessing the limits to future growth.

To assess the carrying capacity of the basin in terms of water availability and allocation.

To establish a diversified economy which is balanced with the availability of water resources in the community.

#### **Water Conservation**

To encourage all users to practice water conservation.

To establish education programs directed at both local residents and visitors on water protection and conservation.

To develop education programs for the general public (residents and visitors) and the agricultural sector about water conservation.

#### **Protection of Riparian Areas**

To secure funding for the preservation and enhancement of riparian areas.

*A key goal of the workshop participants was to support the preparation of a water management plan for the Nicola Basin.*

**Establishing A Strong Diversified Economy**

To ensure a healthy, economically vibrant, environmentally sustainable and strategically planned community.

To encourage economic growth and diversity.

**Establishing A Local Water Management Authority**

To establish a community water board with administrative support.

To establish a local water management board.

To establish a local water management authority.

**Protection of Existing Values**

To enhance what we already have in the Nicola Basin.

*The goal of establishing a local water management authority was supported by workshop participants.*

# *What we still need to know to become effective managers*

Workshop participants indicated that the management of water resources within the Nicola Basin must be based on sound scientific information and analysis. Workshop participants identified the types of information they believed were either lacking or not sufficiently comprehensive to allow effective decision-making and planning of the water resources of the basin. Information and data needs are as follows:

## **Supply, Use and Allocation of Water**

- The supply, location and quality of groundwater resources, including the deep aquifers.
- Recharge time for aquifers.
- The interaction of surface and groundwater.
- The impacts of climate change for future water supply and impact on the basin as a whole.
- The amount of water which is actually being used within the basin.
- The actual supply of water within the basin (both surface and groundwater) before extraction.
- The amount of water which may be wasted due to inefficient use and poor practices.
- How much water can be saved through demand management?
- The optimum allocation of water during droughts.
- The timing of demand versus the timing of supply.
- The limits to water supply within the basin.
- How growth and future changes in land use and development will impact water use and management.

## **Storage**

- How to best manage the Nicola Dam and to identify what is involved in the completion of the dam storage project.
- Extent and location of future storage.



*“Workshop participants identified various types of information and data they believe are necessary to make sound, science-based decisions about the management of water in the Nicola Basin.”*

### Water Quality

- Lack of information on water quality outside of Merritt.
- The impacts of air quality on water quality.
- The impact of increased recreation use.
- The impact of sewage, liquid waste disposal and road construction associated with development.
- The impact of various contaminants within the basin.
- The long term impact of increased forest harvesting due to the mountain pine beetle infestation.

### Protection of Fish

- The required in-stream flows to protect fish.
- Gaps in our knowledge of the fishery resource.
- The ecosystem and processes of the larger lakes.

### Water Management, Planning and Governance

- An understanding of the values of the community.
- How much direction can be taken from the water management plan prepared in the 1980's?
- How to determine priorities for water use and allocation?
- How to manage conflicts?
- What organization will carry on.
- Where is the balance in resolving water use conflicts?
- The impact of First Nations rights and title on water management.
- Impact of reduced senior government resources on water management.



*"There are significant gaps in the information required to make informed, science-based management decisions in the Nicola Basin."*

# *What should the plan address?*

Workshop participants strongly endorsed the need for a water management plan for the basin and also identified the required scope and content of the plan.

## **Strategic or Operations In Orientation?**

Workshop participants indicated that the plan should generally be strategic in nature although it should also deal with operational issues.

## **Based On Sound Analysis**

- The plan needs to be based on sound data and information including an updated water balance, a comprehensive inventory of the present watershed and the activities occurring in it (particularly environmentally sensitive areas), projections of future development and socio-economic and demographic trends.
- The plan should also include the preparation and evaluation of alternative scenarios related to growth, water use and management.

## **Planning Process**

- The planning process must be inclusive and community driven with sign-off and buy-in from the community as a whole.
- The planning process should be oriented to consensus-building and the resolution of any conflicts.
- The plan should reflect and influence other planning processes and documents, particularly land use plans.

## **Content**

- The plan should be integrative and not compartmentalized in nature.
- The plan should include both long-term and short-term strategies for water management including the supply, use and allocation of water.
- The plan must address the issue of water quality and the protection of riparian zones and other sensitive areas.
- The plan must address the protection of fish including the definition of required conservation flows and the protection of water quality.



*"The need for a water management plan for the basin was strongly endorsed by workshop participants."*

- Provisions should be included that anticipate and address droughts.
- The plan must address the issue of existing rights to water resources.
- Issues such as responsibilities for the management and maintenance of control structures such as dams should be addressed including liability for such structures.
- The plan should identify creative means of inducing certain behaviour required for the management of water resources including recognition and reward systems.
- Education and communications must be addressed in the plan particularly as it relates to demand management and protection of water quality.
- The valuation and pricing of water should be addressed.
- A strategy should be included within the plan to address ongoing monitoring of water quantity and quality.

### Implementation Strategy

- A time frame for implementation of the plan must be established in the plan.
- The implementation strategy must deal with the issue of funding—what are the sources of funding for specific initiatives and will the funding be adequate? Is there a source of sustained funding for required management activities.
- The plan should also have a built-in review process to ensure that the plan remains an effective tool for managing water resources within the basin.
- Accountability for implementation must be clearly spelled out in the plan given that various agencies would be involved.

### Governance

- The plan must identify who will ultimately be responsible for the successful implementation and monitoring of the plan's effectiveness.
- A decision-making framework must be clearly spelled out and established.

*"The plan must address both strategic and operational issues and must be based on sound analysis."*



# *Who should lead the plan preparation and implementation process?*

## **Planning Process**

Workshop participants generally felt that an interim group should be empowered to begin the process of preparing a terms of reference for the planning process as well as liaising with the various levels of government to obtain their commitment and funding support. One option was to empower the Nicola Watershed Community Round Table to act in an interim capacity until a steering group for the planning process could be selected and put in place. Some workshop participants indicated support for the Nicola Watershed Community Round Table to not only initiate the planning process but also to coordinate the process. Workshop participants were unified in their view that the planning process needs to be locally controlled and needs to be inclusive with key local interests represented on the steering committee and consulted throughout the process. There was considerable support for a grass roots-oriented process with extensive public consultation. One group at the workshop prepared a graphic indicating how they saw the planning process being structured. This is shown in the figure on page 18.

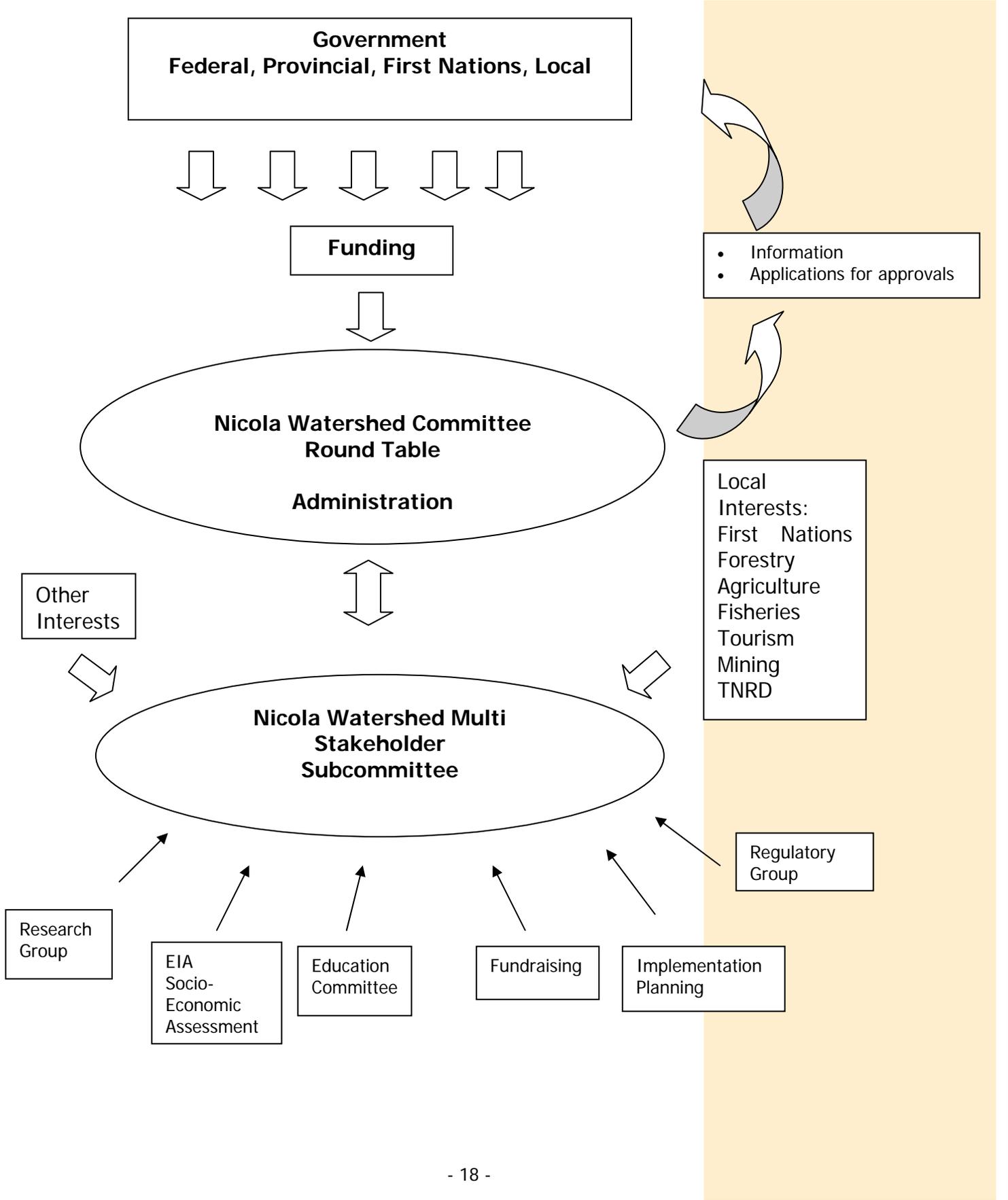
## **Plan Implementation Process**

Workshop participants recognized the importance of plan implementation and there was concern that without an effective implementation process, many of the issues within the basin would not be satisfactorily addressed. Participants were asked who should lead the implementation of the plan and monitor its effectiveness. Generally, the participants believe that an independent water management authority for the basin is required. There was no clear direction in terms of whether the board of



*“Workshop participants believe that an independent water management authority is required for the Nicola Basin.”*

the authority should be elected or appointed. There was however, strong support that all major stakeholders should be represented on the board including the local community, provincial and federal agencies, First Nations, local governments and representatives of major industries within the basin. The question of whether this management authority should have direct jurisdiction for certain aspects of water management was discussed but there was no firm direction on this point. An option which was discussed was the use of existing regulatory powers of local government, First Nations and senior government agencies to assist the local authority in the implementation of the plan.



# *What are the next steps?*

Workshop participants agreed to meet again to establish the basis for proceeding with the preparation of a water use management plan and to develop solutions for immediate issues. There was agreement that a long term planning process should not overshadow or prevent the solution of key issues which require immediate attention. There was agreement that work on the study looking at the feasibility of completing the Nicola Dam should proceed.



*"There are key water management issues which require immediate action."*

# *Appendix A*

## Presentations Made To Charting Our Water Future Workshop

Geological History of the Nicola Watershed by Paul Blackett, Kala Groundwater Consulting.

Natural Process of the Nicola Basin by Judy Guichon.

Ecological Processes of the Nicola Basin by Alan Caverly, Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection and Dean Watts, Fisheries and Oceans Canada.

First Nations Perspective by Ko'waintco Michel, Chairperson, Nicola Tribal Association.

Panel Discussion on the Use and Management of Water By Various Sectors of the Economy:

Agnes Jackson, Agriculture  
Jerry Canuel, Forestry  
Gordon Petersen, Urban Development  
Bob Hamaguchi, Mining  
Robert Hood, Tourism

Existing Water Use and Requirements by Jeremy Cooke, Urban Systems Ltd.

Existing Water Availability and Water Balance by Paul Doyle, Doyle Engineering

Individuals wishing to obtain copies of the presentations are asked to contact the Nicola Watershed Community Round Table at their mailing address (Box 400, Merritt, BC V1K 1B8) or via email [esalomon@mail.ocis.net](mailto:esalomon@mail.ocis.net). A fee will be charged for postage and photocopying if the presentations are mailed.

# Appendix B

## Individuals attending the workshop.

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Caverly	Alan	MWLAP 1259 Dalhousie Drive, Kamloops, BC V2C 5Z5
Charters	Deloris	NWSFA Box 188, Merritt, BC V1K 1B8
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Dickenson	Kevin	Land and Water BC 145 - 3rd Avenue Floor 3 Kamloops, BC V2C 3M1
Dion	Wendy	c/o NVIT 4155 Belshaw Street Merritt, BC V1K 1R1
Doyle	Paul	Doyle Engineering 134 River Road Kamloops, BC V2C 4P9
Duncan	Gilbert	665 Sydney Avenue, Kamloops, BC

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McCarty	Henry	c/o NVIT 4155 Belshaw Street Merritt, BC V1K 1R1
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McGregor	Ian	MWLAP 1259 Dalhousie Drive, Kamloops, BC V2C 5Z5
McKay-Smith	Al	780 Highway 8 Merritt, BC V1K 1P1
McPhail	Myrna	Box 1762, Merritt, BC V1K 1B8
Methot	Terry	#48 - 23151 Haney Bypass, Maple Ridge, BC V2S 0X5
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Oram	Arnie	Box 106, Spences Bridge, BC V0K 2L0
Pehl	Dave	Fraser Basin Council 200A - 1383 McGill Road, Kamloops, BC V2C 6K7
Petersen	Gord	Urban Systems Suite 200 286 St. Paul Street, Kamloops, BC V2C 6G4
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Reiter	Wendy	c/o NVIT 4155 Belshaw Street Merritt, BC V1K 1R1
Rippin	Robert	519 Columbia Street Kamloops, BC V2C 2J8
Roberts	Rachel	c/o NVIT 4155 Belshaw Street Merritt, BC V1K 1R1
Rose	Guy	Box 1, Quilchena, BC V0E 2R0
Rose	Mike	Box 31, Quilchena, BC V0E 2R0
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Sanford	Jill	1901 Parker Drive Merritt, BC V1K 1J3
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