

Water Elsewhere

- The City of Toronto recently passed a law making it mandatory to disconnect the downspout on eavestroughs, so that rainwater will have to soak into the ground.
- The City of Portland offers residents and businesses a significant tax reduction for having a small impervious footprint (less than 1,000 square feet), creating or maintaining tree coverage, disconnecting downspouts, installing rain gardens and other low impact development ideas. Portland has also retrofitted a number of streets with landscaped curb extensions, swales, planter strips, pervious pavement, and street trees to intercept and infiltrate stormwater.
- Dr. Gilles Wendling, a top groundwater specialist describes what happened in the Ogallala aquifer in the US, one of the key aquifers for the whole of the US, supporting several states. In 1714 there were 100 wells and lots of water, then in 1937, there were over 100 wells added and still lots of water. Based on this picture, it was assumed that there were no limits to the water supply and in 1982 there were 74,000 wells. The water has now dropped over 40 feet, and they are in crisis. This is what can quickly happen when wells are added bit by bit without the information to tell managers how much water there actually is, and how the aquifer refills and empties.
- Uruguay and South Africa are the only two countries in the world that give their citizens the constitutional right to clean water.
- There is an international consensus that water resources must be managed within the context of a watershed.
- The Cowichan Regional District developed a Water Management Plan with partners from First Nations, provincial and federal government, industry and local residents.
- Langley, B.C. is mapping their groundwater to determine the carrying capacity of the area

- Chelsea, Quebec requires developers to prove that enough water exists to support any new development before approvals are given.
- In some areas of California, developers must prove there is enough water, or pay to retrofit enough existing houses to ensure there is no need for new water.
- Identify and fix leaks in the system for residential, commercial and industrial users – some estimates that this can create a savings of 5-30% of water
- Vernon BC has been reusing municipal water for 30 years now – it goes back into irrigating agricultural, forestry and recreational lands.
- Toronto's healthy house is a pilot – they reuse waste water up to 5 times and have reduced their consumption by 90% and yet maintain the quality and reliability of water
- BC is one area where regulations are in place to have a large scale water reclamation projects.
- Some communities in Australia where it is quite dry looking at carrying capacity and then setting population limits based on that. They also have plans for vegetation management and open areas to help with adapting. In some cases has allowed the population to go above the original capacity – but the important part was they understood their capacity and then set planning and regulation to help maintain that first. This is similar to what QB has done with a cap on their population - they are very progressive in their thinking that way.
- There is no formula for calculating carrying capacity – each system will be unique. Some will take a lot of use and others will take little or no use.
- We need to look at ways to reduce our water consumption but we also need to ensure we have enough water to provide not just drinking water but those other services we get from a healthy ecosystem, or the biodiversity – besides quality of life we also get clean air, clean water, enough water, water for our food, cooler temperatures, ability of the plants to adapt and grow and support the food chains, constant climate, shelter.