



CANADIAN WATER NETWORK
RÉSEAU CANADIEN DE L'EAU

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NEWS RELEASE

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Unique research approach forges partnerships and clarifies user needs before research begins

For many organizations *applied research* means bringing research talent to bear on a practical problem. But for the Canadian Water Network the approach to ensuring that research leads to impact involves much more than just results-oriented research.

Through its [national research consortia](#), CWN is bringing together researchers and the users of research into multi-partner, multi-funder communities of practice that share a common goal of better water management.

In the latest evolution of its research consortium model, CWN has taken its user-engagement approach a step further – end users will not only be consulted to develop the questions to be addressed by researchers, but in a recent proposal round they have competed to win the opportunity to co-develop with CWN a research program within their watershed.

Watershed management groups submitted competitive proposals to obtain CWN support to develop regional research consortium nodes to address shared user needs defined by multi-stakeholder groups in their area. Through this process the groups took an active role in developing the scope and focus of calls for projects to which researchers will respond.

“We have turned the traditional research process on its head,” says CWN Executive Director Bernadette Conant. “By soliciting watershed groups across Canada to compete to develop requests for proposals that address their needs, we have charged these groups with identifying a practical issue to be solved for which there is shared interest among local decision-makers. This will result in strong interest by watershed managers to implement the results of research.”

CWN will help watershed groups identify the kind of research most likely to have value for them and connect them with Canada’s leading water researchers before the research even begins, Ms Conant said.

The launch of CWN's Regional Watershed Research Consortia began in the fall of 2010, when the network [issued a call for expressions of interest](#) from watershed management groups interested in establishing [regional research consortia to assess the cumulative effects of stressors in their watersheds](#).

The call resulted in 29 submissions from regional watershed groups from across nine provinces and two territories. Their expressions of interest were peer reviewed, from which four groups were eventually selected to develop proposal requests to establish a research consortium node in their watersheds.

The newly created [Canadian Watershed Research Consortium](#) will support science-based decision-making to support a common framework for cumulative effects assessment and determine the impact of these stressors in watersheds across the country.

"CWN is excited to be working with these dedicated watershed management groups," said Dr. Kelly Munkittrick, CWN Scientific Director. "Through the consortium process we will co-invest in the research but – just as important – facilitate the development of enduring partnerships between end users and researchers."

CWN is pleased to announce the regional watershed groups that have been selected as the inaugural nodes within the Canadian Watershed Research Consortium.

- The Grand River Watershed Consortium, whose research call will solicit proposals that integrate research and monitoring, population growth, water supply and water quality within the Grand River Watershed
- The Muskoka River Watershed Monitoring and Management Consortium, whose call will solicit proposals that examine increasing shoreline development, emerging issues, collaborative monitoring and management of multiple stressors
- The Regional Research Consortium for the Watershed of the Northumberland Strait, whose call will seek proposals that examine the future of fisheries, and the cumulative effects of hydrological, sediment and nutrient regimes in the region
- The Tobacco Creek Model Watershed Research Consortium, whose research call will solicit submissions that support cumulative effects monitoring of agri-ecosystem sustainability within the Red River Valley and Lake Winnipeg Basin

Calls for [research proposals](#) to be conducted within these watersheds will be posted on the CWN website in July 2011.

The four inaugural watershed nodes are complemented by a pilot node for the program established in the Saint John Harbour, New Brunswick in 2010, totaling five watershed nodes that focus on advancing regional environmental frameworks to support cumulative effects assessment.

For more information on the watershed nodes and the focus of their proposed research consortium, please contact the following watershed consortium proponents –

Grand River Watershed Consortium

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Regional Research Consortium for the Watershed of the Northumberland Strait

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