

LESSONS

Many diverse perspectives, experiences, priorities, and concerns around watershed management and health co-exist in the vast geography of Northern BC. With such rich and complex relationships between water, land and communities, connections between diverse knowledges are not always apparent.

Bringing people together in the natural settings of the watersheds opens channels to sharing ideas, knowledges, and to thinking about ‘upstream’ water-related determinants of health in new ways. Using accessible tools like maps, rich picture maps, storytelling and visioning supports this collective learning process that is key to innovation and collaboration.

Focusing this knowledge sharing and integration in an action-oriented way is important to bring diverse actors together to collaborate in applied strategies for improving watershed management and related determinants of health in Northern BC.

OUTCOMES

- Northern Health Position Paper on the Environment as a Context for Health *
- Early development of a Watershed Portal to integrate and share resources within watersheds
- Digital Stories with Watershed Partners
- A commitment from Northern Health to pursue intersectoral approaches in collaborative work
- A common language to understand how watershed governance influence health and well-being

* Available from <https://www.northernhealth.ca>

DIGITAL STORYTELLING

Three **digital stories** were produced in conjunction with the **watershed partners:**

Yin kak honzu: The Earth is beautiful
Sandra Harris & the Wet’suwet’en Nation

How one fish can impact the health of a community
Wayne Salewski & the Nechako Environment and Water Stewardship Society

Kiskatinaw watershed: Water stewardship and the community of One Island Lake
Reg Whiten & the City of Dawson Creek

View the stories online at:
http://ecohealthkta.net/digital_stories/



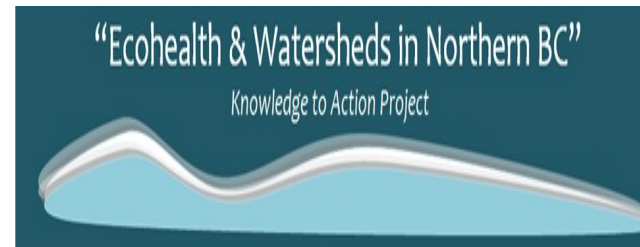
CONTACT

Contact us by email at ecohealth@unbc.ca
or visit www.ecohealthkta.net
to learn more about
“Ecohealth & Watersheds in Northern BC”

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Upstream is a Place

*Improving Social and Environmental
Determinants of Health through
Integrated Water Governance*



INTRODUCTION

Growing attention to ‘upstream’ water related determinants of health in Northern BC, challenge researchers, administrators and frontline practitioners to collaborate with communities and community organizations to examine how watershed health impacts human society and well-being.

The **‘Ecohealth & Watersheds in Northern BC’ Knowledge-to-Action** project, an innovative and dynamic joint university-health authority initiative, focuses on integrating knowledge from diverse sectors, disciplines and experiences to better understand health in the context of social-ecological systems.

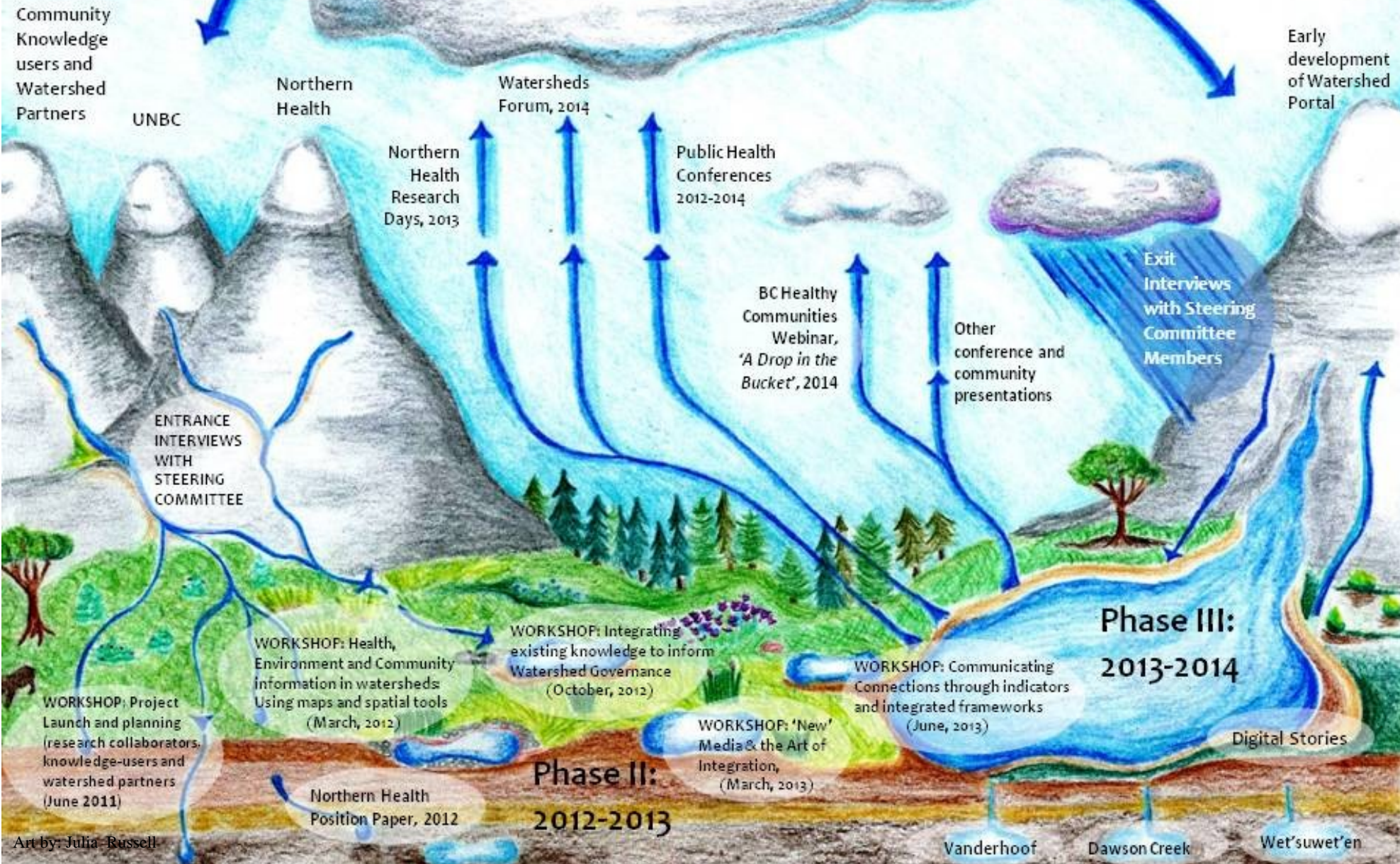
A participatory research community, including people from varied experiences and viewpoints, engaged in collaborative learning processes to better understand the complexity of the relationships between ecosystems, human society and communities, and watersheds as important ecological settings for well-being.

Interviews, workshops, rich picture mapping, and storytelling methodologies were used to share diverse ideas and knowledges, and to develop strategies for putting this deeper understanding to use for improving watershed management and ecosystem health in northern BC.



The Ecohealth & Watersheds in Northern BC Knowledge to Action Project

Phase I: 2011-2012



Project Development Cycles

The project was iterative and developed through three primary phases of work, which are depicted in the image. In the beginning there were three distinct sets of actors who had little experience working collaboratively with the one another.

The first phase launched the project and formally brought together these actors, as shown in the mountains to the left. This started the conversation. These points of contact fed into the Phase II workshops, represented by the small ponds. The collaborative work also resulted in tangible outputs as indicated by the pooling groundwater.

This project facilitated relationship development and progression in thinking to upstream determinants of health. This uptake of the ideas is shown in the evaporating water and coalescing clouds. The new receptor sites helped initiate another cycle (Phase III) of work and including distribution and evaluation. Exit interviews with the steering committee members enhanced the final pool of understanding and collective knowledges, represented by the lake.

Phase I: Project launch and early interactions (2011-2012)

- Project Launch and Planning Meeting
- Steering Committee Interviews

Phase II: Tools for integration workshop series (2012-2013)

- Making the Connections through Maps and Spatial Tools
- Participation at World Water Day Community Gathering
- Integrating existing Knowledge to Inform Watershed Governance
- Research update: Environment and Health in the Nechako & Fraser watersheds

Phase III: Sharing stories, profiling & next steps (2013-2014)

- New Media & the Art of Integration
- Communicating Connections through Indicators and Integrated Frameworks
- Health, Environment & Community - Digital Storytelling Project
- KTA Project Participant Survey & Steering Committee Exit Interviews