



BC Ground Water Association
Planning Session held on June 20, 2009

Summary Report

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Overview

Compass Resource Management was hired to help facilitate a one day strategic planning session that was held on June 20, 2009. The primary goal of the session was to lay the ground work for the possible development of a strategic plan for the BC Ground Water Association (BCGWA). This work included:

- Undertaking a preliminary review of BCGWA
- Reviewing important policy issues facing the organization
- Confirming a series of planning objectives and strategic priorities
- Identifying a preliminary set of planning actions to undertake over the next 3 years (2009-2012)
- Agreeing to any needed follow up steps required for the further consideration and development of a strategic plan

15 members of BCGWA's board (regional directors and executive) and staff (Managing Director and secretary/treasurer) attended the session held at the Ramada Inn in Abbotsford.

Prior to the session, a series of preparatory interviews were carried out with knowledgeable BCGWA members. The preliminary information collected during the interviews was used to help frame and structure the discussions during the planning session.

This summary report provides a brief overview of the day's proceedings and the main conclusions from the session. The report has been organized according to the planning steps undertaken during the session, namely:

1. Strategic Planning Overview
2. Situational Analysis
3. Strategic Issues
4. Planning Objectives
5. Identification of Actions & Strategies
6. Next Steps

1. Overview of Strategic Planning

Strategic planning is typically used to help set organizational priorities, build consensus on a shared vision, and allocate limited resources in a focused manner. The basic steps in strategic planning include: assessing the environment, clarifying an organization's direction (both in terms of mandate and mission), identifying strategic issues, prioritizing actions, and developing detailed workplans for how the plan will be implemented. Given the challenge of carrying out a planning exercise over only one day, a number of steps were skipped over and may need to be returned to at a later point. For example, the issue of reviewing and revising BCGWA's mission was raised at least twice during the session.

2. Situational Analysis

A preliminary situational analysis (or SWOT analysis) – *which provides a reference point for orienting an organization in relation to the greater environment that it operates* – was developed and this was reviewed and revised during the planning session. The revised analysis is summarized in Figure 1 below.

Table 1 Situational Analysis from the Planning Session

<p style="text-align: center;">Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diverse membership • Strong financial footing • Tremendous depth of knowledge and expertise in the GW industry (from source to tap) • Recognized as groundwater experts in province • Good at getting representation from across province • Adapted well to the growth in the industry • Provides networking & business development opportunities • Strong voice for the responsible development and conservation of GW resources • Strong working relationship with MOE • Effective at influencing provincial regulations • High commitment of members who stay involved for the long-term 	<p style="text-align: center;">Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diverse and spread out membership (often with competing interests) • Some members not representative of GW industry • Have limited volunteer base to help educate and raise public awareness • Lack of clear direction and goals • Limited public awareness of BCGWA and what they do • Relatively small membership across the province • Lack of active members within BCGWA (including Directors) • Lack of member accountability on their adherence to regulations • Inwardly focused • Reactive when dealing with policy development (e.g. pending regulations) • Limited resources to respond quickly to things • Do not have good penetration (influence) through all levels of GW policy development • Limited education and training programs (compared with other organizations)
<p style="text-align: center;">Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government is downloading to local governments who are becoming more aware of GW issues and are looking for advice and support • Public is becoming more aware of GW issues and problems are becoming more evident in some parts of the province • Phase 2 of the GWPRs are about to be released (depending on your viewpoint) • GW is becoming more recognized as a safe and cost effective water supply alternative • Members are interested in additional training • Have money to invest in new initiatives • Development of geothermal wells • Revisions to the <i>Water Act</i> 	<p style="text-align: center;">Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of an effective provincial compliance and enforcement mechanism for members to follow regulations • Other water related organizations are beginning to comment and work on GW issues • Phase 2 of the GWPRs are about to be released (depending on your viewpoint) • Uncertain funding from government • Government subsidy of surface water supply • Regional Districts (local governments) developing own GW regulations • Loosing engagement of grass roots members (this could in turn affect manufacturer's conference funding)

3. Strategic Issues

A number of recurring strategic issues facing BCGWA were identified during the preliminary interviews and these were reviewed during the session, as follows:

- The role of BCGWA and its relationship with the province and in relation to other water related organizations
- There is a lack of awareness and adherence to industry standards and regulations (e.g. GWPRs) by members and non-members
- There is a lack of capacity on the part of the province to monitor and enforce regulations and maintain an information database
- There are fairness and competition issues between contractors
- There are liability concerns associated with members providing positions or advice on GW issues and on part of BCGWA
- There are concerns about the lack of active participation in BCGWA and about the size of the membership
- There are regional disparities in BCGWA support and outreach
- There is a lack of a clear vision for BCGWA given its diverse members

4. Planning Objectives

Based on the available background materials and the information collected during the preliminary interviews, a number of tentative planning objectives and sub-objectives¹ were identified to help facilitate discussions for what BCGWA was trying to achieve over the next few years. These objectives were either internally focused (i.e. specific to BCGWA or its members) or externally focused (i.e. targeted on the outside environment). Workshop participants discussed, edited and agreed to the following planning objectives which should be used for strategic planning purposes, as follows:

Internally Focused

- To maintain and build a strong and dynamic organization
 1. To maintain and build an active membership
 2. To maintain and build the financial security of BCGWA (i.e. secure and stable funding)
 3. To limit exposure for BCGWA
 4. To strengthen the participation in the Association's governance system
- To promote and encourage harmony and cooperation among members
 5. To clarify and inform member's on the direction and goals for BCGWA's work
 6. To facilitate a level playing field for GW contractors
- To support the professional development of members
 7. To encourage and facilitate continuing education (e.g. relevant workshops), training, and certification programs
 8. To support the certification of GW industry professionals (e.g. pump installers to ITA status)

Externally Focused

- To promote and protect the responsible development of GW resources
 9. To support effective compliance of regulations and good industry standards & practices

¹ Note that sub-objectives illustrate and describe how the objectives are intended to be achieved.

10. To raise public awareness of regulations and the GW industry
 11. To educate and provide support to communities facing GW problems
 12. To support and facilitate an accurate, accessible and up to date information database for the GW industry
 13. To develop and promote business opportunities
- To influence legislation and regulations
 14. To maintain and enhance relations with provincial regulators
 15. To raise the profile of BCGWA as the recognized leader on GW issues
 16. To network and build coalitions with similarly minded organizations

5. Identifying Actions and Strategies

In order to help screen the possible actions or strategies available to achieve the agreed to planning objectives a prioritization exercise was undertaken. Workshop participants were given 6 dots to place by the 16 sub-objectives that they felt were the most important for BCGWA to invest in over the coming 3 year period. Participants could place their dots on different sub-objectives or place them all on a single sub-objective if they felt strongly about it. The results from the prioritization exercise were as follows (in order of dots received):

# of Dots	Sub-Objective
13	1. To maintain and build an active membership
13	14. To maintain and enhance relations with provincial regulators
11	7. To encourage and facilitate continuing education, training, and certification programs
11	9. To support effective compliance of regulations and good industry standards & practices
10	10. To raise public awareness of regulations and the GW industry
7	15. To raise the profile of BCGWA as the recognized leader on GW issues
5	2. To maintain and build the financial security of BCGWA
5	5. To clarify and inform member's on the direction and goals for BCGWA's work
5	13. To develop and promote business opportunities
4	8. To support the certification of GW industry professionals
2	11. To educate and provide support to communities facing GW problems
2	12. To support and facilitate an accurate, accessible and up to date information database for the GW industry
1	3. To limit exposure for BCGWA
1	6. To facilitate a level playing field for GW contractors
0	4. To strengthen the participation in the Association's governance system
0	16. To network and build coalitions with similarly minded organizations

For each of the top five sub-objectives a series of actions / strategies were identified and agreed to for how BCGWA would go about trying to achieve them over the next few years. Participants were also invited to offer additional actions which they felt should be considered because they would be effective. Ultimately, a prioritized list was generated and agreed to and which serves as a guide for BCGWA to work towards, as follows:

#	Recommended BCGWA Actions for 2009-2012	Comment
1	Develop and Implement a "Membership Strategy"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The strategy should lay out who, how and when and include a target for membership growth • The strategy would be deliberate in interest groups being targeted (e.g. maintaining

		<p>grass roots contractors, water purveyors & administrators, etc.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It would consider incentives and possible changes to rate structure for members • It could also include a survey
2	Offer “grass roots” members more hands on training and presentations (@ workshops)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This could be directly related to drilling or pumping contractors (e.g. rigging, soils identification, etc.) • <i>A planning committee could be struck to identify and organize relevant sessions</i>
3	Provide incentives for members to attend AGM and annual conference	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This could include providing first aid upgrades or recertification or WHMIS training • <i>A planning committee could be struck to identify and organize relevant sessions</i>
4	Work towards establishing a permanent and formal mechanism (or body) between BCGWA and the provincial government at the policy level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This could entail regularly planned meetings twice a year (both at MOE and Ministry of Health)
5	Write a letter to MOE to maintain the GWAB	
6	Develop an internal BCGWA position on a permit system for water supply wells	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This could apply to both drilling and pumping
7	Update and redistribute the contract template for use by small contractors	
8	Establish and maintain an on-line pricing guideline	
9	Conduct an informal interview of pump installers to gauge support for electrical tickets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If there is support, then BCGWA would work with Safety Branch to support members getting their tickets
10	Explore the development of an advertising campaign in a pilot community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The purpose would be to test the effectiveness of media to (1) raise awareness and educate people about groundwater issues, regulations and qualified professionals, and (2) develop new business opportunities for the GW industry
11	Provide on-line education resources and materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For example, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Volunteer speaker's list ○ PowerPoint presentation ○ Video segments (GW & wells) • It was noted that there are a lot of materials already available and these could be updated and reposted.
12	Consider and develop an association logo for all of BCGWA materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The logo would illustrate that the BCGWA is the “BC Ground Water Leader”
13	Initiate semi-annual planning sessions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The sessions could be geared at the continuation of a strategic plan or be more focused at providing feedback and direction on the Association's work planning
14	Develop a well maintenance brochure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Could use NGWA's material as a template
15	Explore BCGWA's position on artificial recharge and geo-exchange	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This could entail consulting with knowledgeable experts to inform BCGWA's position (e.g. Alan Daykin)

6. Next Steps

During the planning session there were a few suggestions for follow-up and/or next steps:

- Continuing to have planning sessions on a semi-annual basis
- Revisiting BCGWA's mission statement
- Development of a strategic plan

Other steps could include the development of performance measures to gauge how well BCGWA is achieving its stated objectives, and the development of a more detailed workplan. All the steps in a strategic plan could provide opportunities to engage and build membership support and awareness of BCGWA's work, if desired as well.