

Other engagement activities

As part of the engagement process Ministry of Environment staff also met with representatives of other provincial ministries as well as federal government agencies including Environment Canada and Fisheries and Oceans Canada. In addition, the Ministry of Environment worked with the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) to ensure local government was made aware of the WAM process, Discussion Paper and opportunities to participate. Specific activities included a workshop at the 2009 UBCM Annual Conference and four conference calls with local government associations during February 2010.



Stakeholders participate in a workshop break-out session.

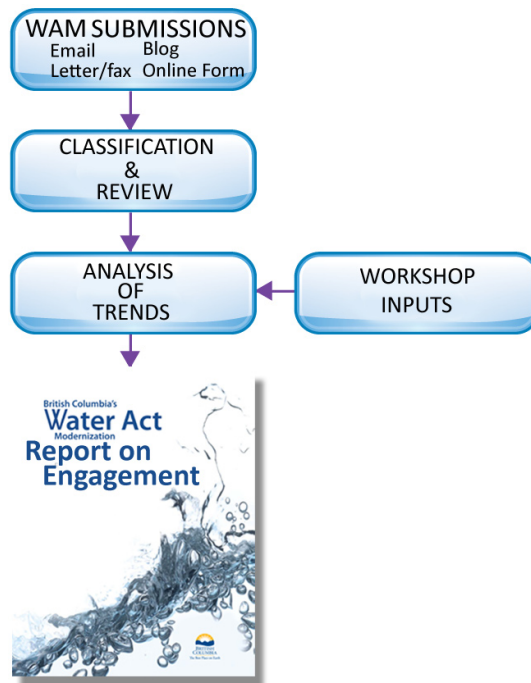
During the engagement period, the Ministry of Environment responded to a number of formal requests from stakeholder groups who wanted to discuss their ideas and comments on *Water Act* Modernization. Although Ministry staff were unable to accommodate all requests, presentations were made to the Salt Spring Island Water Council, Canadian Water Resources Association, Partnership Committee on Agriculture and the Environment, Cowichan Watershed Board and the Association of Kootenay Boundary Local Government.

5 How input was managed

Over the course of the WAM engagement period, almost 900 unique submissions were received and over 200 pages of workshop feedback were collected.

In order to organize the large number and wide range of comments, the submissions were assigned to one of 11 broad stakeholder categories as well as a specific category for Individuals and First Nations submissions. These categories were used for analysis purposes and were based on submitters self-identifying as a representative of a particular group or organization. Submissions that did not self-identify or were not affiliated with a specific organization or group were classified as “Individuals.” In total, Individual submissions comprised the largest proportion (over 80 percent) of total submissions received. Individual submissions were further classified into five sub-categories, and included four different “shared-form” submissions similar to form letters. Appendix One

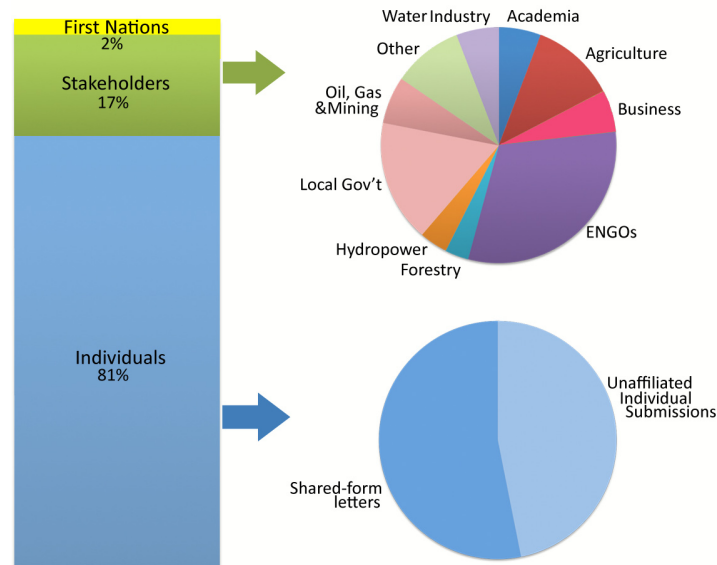
Figure 4: Process for developing the Report on Engagement



of this report contains a list of the stakeholder groups and First Nations organizations that made submissions.

A database management system was used to manage and track the information generated through the engagement process. Submissions in each stakeholder or First Nations category were systematically reviewed by Ministry of Environment policy analysts, including staff directly involved in developing water policy options.

Figure 5: Water Act Modernization submissions received by sector



Principal themes and concerns from each submission were also identified and captured during the review of submissions and entered into the database. Some of the input received, such as the number or percentage of submissions that supported a given WAM principle, could readily be quantified. However, much of the comment in submissions was qualitative, for example policy

suggestions or the expression of concerns about the direction that water policy may take in BC. Review and interpretation by staff along with the database developed by the Ministry, provided a system for quantifying some of the qualitative information inherent in most submissions.

It is important to note that many respondents did not provide specific comments on all aspects of the WAM principles, goals and objectives, but instead chose to focus on areas of highest concern to their organization or to them personally. Where there was no specific response, Ministry analysts would record “no comment” in the database. The Ministry did not interpret “no comment” as indifference to a particular topic, or use this as a measure of importance British Columbians attached to a topic. Rather, the Ministry concentrated its assessments of these areas using only those definitive comments it received.

Once all the submissions were entered into the database, the Ministry was able to generate summary reports showing general trends and levels of support for the WAM principles, goals and options proposed in the Discussion Paper. Overall trends were determined and further analysis enabled an assessment of general trends and preferences for each stakeholder group, First Nations and Individual submission categories. This approach also helped to identify conflicts as well as similarities in preferences on WAM topics among the different sectors. Many of these summaries form the basis of this Engagement Report.

Feedback and comments from the *Water Act* Modernization workshops were not included in the database, but are available in Appendix Two of this report. Workshops were

largely information sharing sessions and feedback from these sessions was summarized in a more general way. The results of the workshops also provide a valuable means for confirming trends and concerns revealed by the analysis of written submissions.

It is important to recognize the limitations of the analysis and note that the results are intended to illustrate broad trends, preferences and themes, rather than detailed statistics. Moreover, some submissions were made by representative organizations or associations on behalf of many individuals or companies. For example, a single submission made by a watershed stewardship group or industry association may represent the views of hundreds of individual members. While analysts considered this reality in their review of submissions, no attempt was made to adjust the data based on the size or membership of the organization.



Ministry of Environment staff reviewed thousands of pages of feedback



View of Cowichan Lake