



Northwest Biosolids Management Association 2015

Working in a Biosolids Crisis of Confidence – a Litmus Test of Engagement

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September 20 - 22 – Chelan, WA

A Biosolids Crisis Reality



BC Biosolids Vignette Outline

2015 BC Biosolids Conflagration Vignette

- Prologue
- The Set and Cast
- Timeline of Events in the Nicola Valley
- Turning Points and “Points of No Return”
- Engagement for Relationships
- The Litmus Paper
- Learning Opportunities

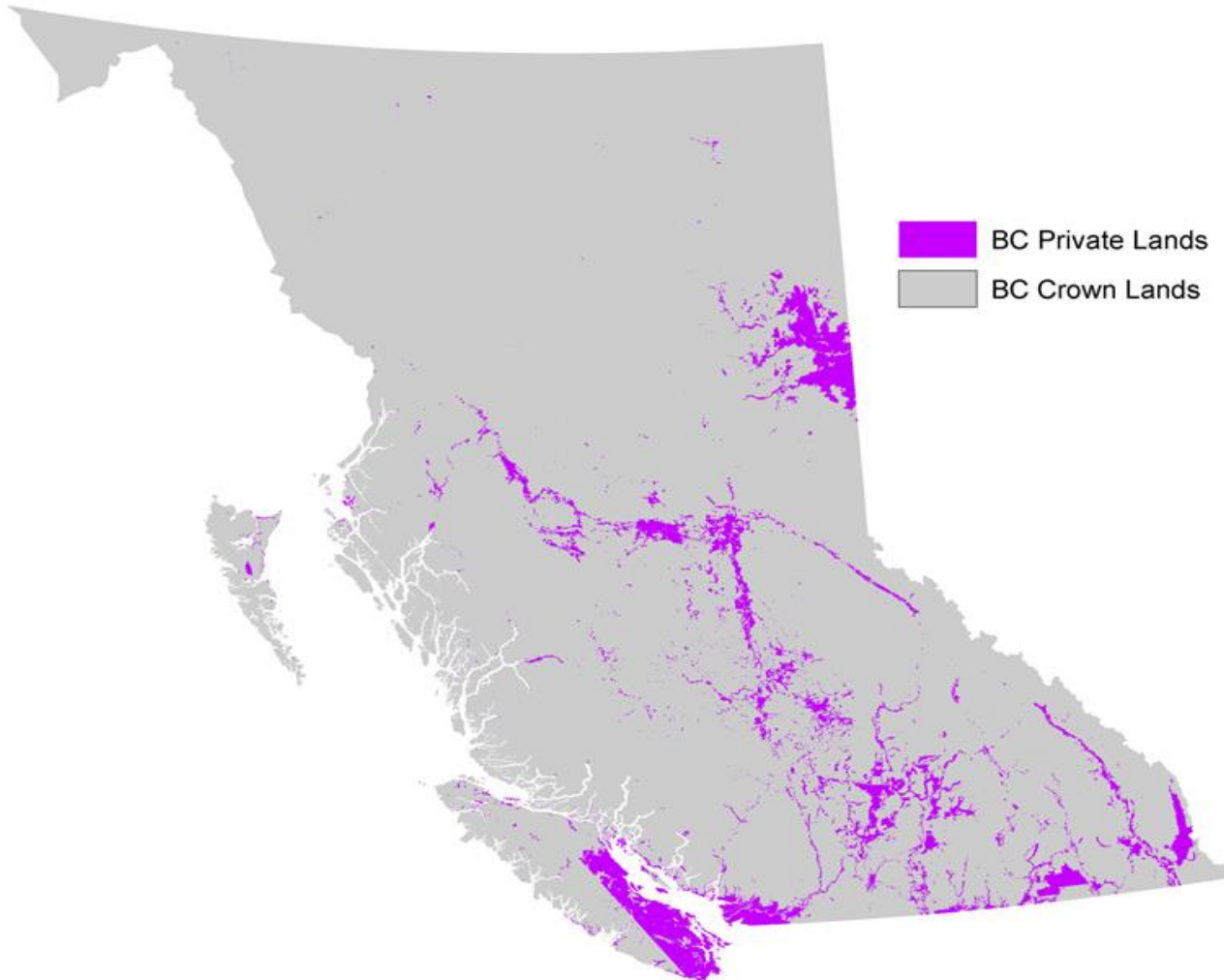


Prologue – OMRR

The BC Organic Matter Recycling Regulation Requires *No Stakeholder Engagement*

- Think “Two Year Nutrient Management Plan” with regulated standards for biosolids and soil quality
- 30-day notification process with one to three regulatory agencies
- Other regulations stipulate consultation or engagement requirements depending on land ownership/use

Prologue: Crown & Private Land in British Columbia



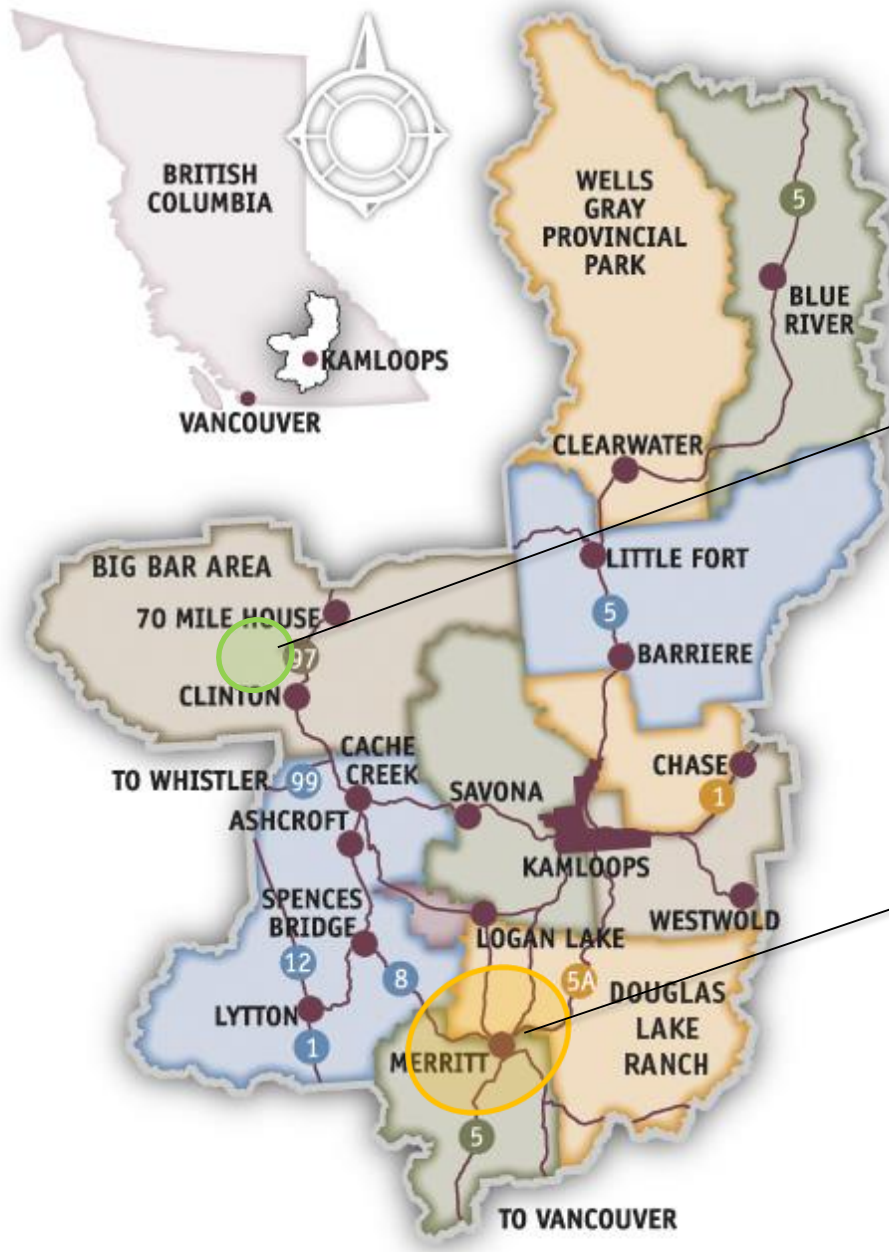
Prologue: First Nations Land Claims in British Columbia



Set Location



Set Locations

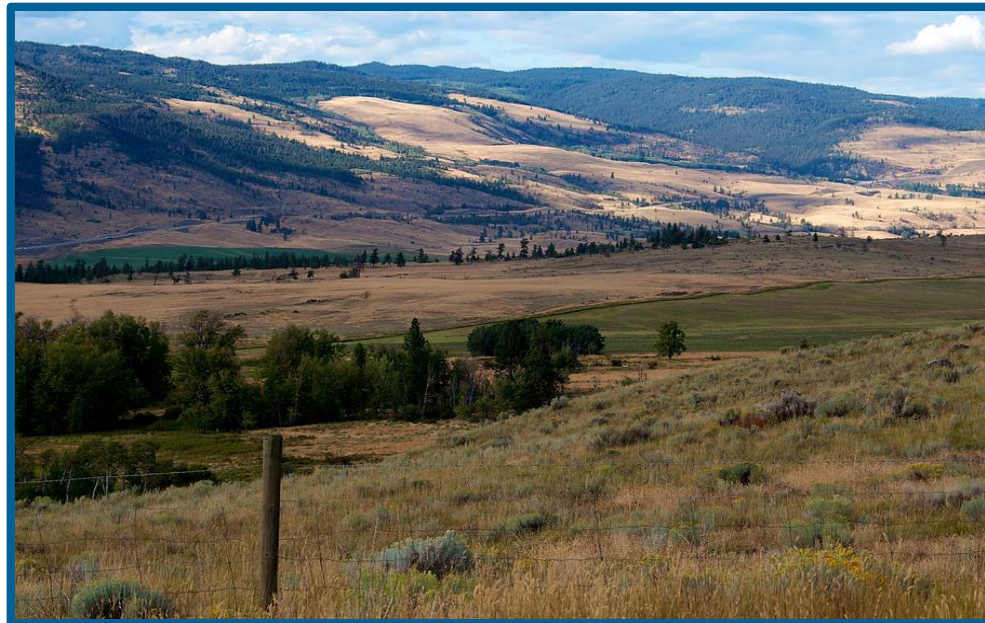


OK Ranch

Nicola Valley



Nicola Valley





OK Ranch



The BC Biosolids Vignette Cast

The Cast

- BioCentral
- Friends of the Nicola Valley
- Local First Nations Groups
- Thompson Nicola Regional District
- Ministry of Environment
- David Suzuki (cameo)



Vignette Timeline - Part 1

Ignition Source - Fall 2014

- September 2014 – BioCentral begins operations near Merritt
- **October 2014 – Nearby landowners complain that the odour is unacceptable.**
- November 2014 – ‘Friends of the Nicola Valley’ is formed
- **December 2014 – Increased awareness of residents, press for more information**



Vignette Timeline - Part 2

- Early January 2015 - Issue gains provincial attention
- Late January 2015 - Public meeting hosted by Nicola Community Watershed Roundtable
- Early February 2015 - Thompson Nicola Regional District committee meeting
- March 2015 - BLOCKADES; BioCentral stops hauling biosolids into the Nicola Valley
- April 2015 - Five Chiefs occupy Premier's office



Vignette Timeline - Part 3

- April 2015 – First Nations declare moratorium on biosolids
- May 2015 – First Nations protest at provincial legislature in Victoria
- **June 2015 – Provincial government announces scientific review of biosolids use**
- June 2015 – New biosolids site approved near Merritt – residents protest reinvigorated



Vignette Timeline - Part 4

- August 2015 – Community corresponds with the Health Ministry about potential negative effects of biosolids
- August 2015 – Scientist from NGO provides alarmist assessment of biosolids on CBC Radio



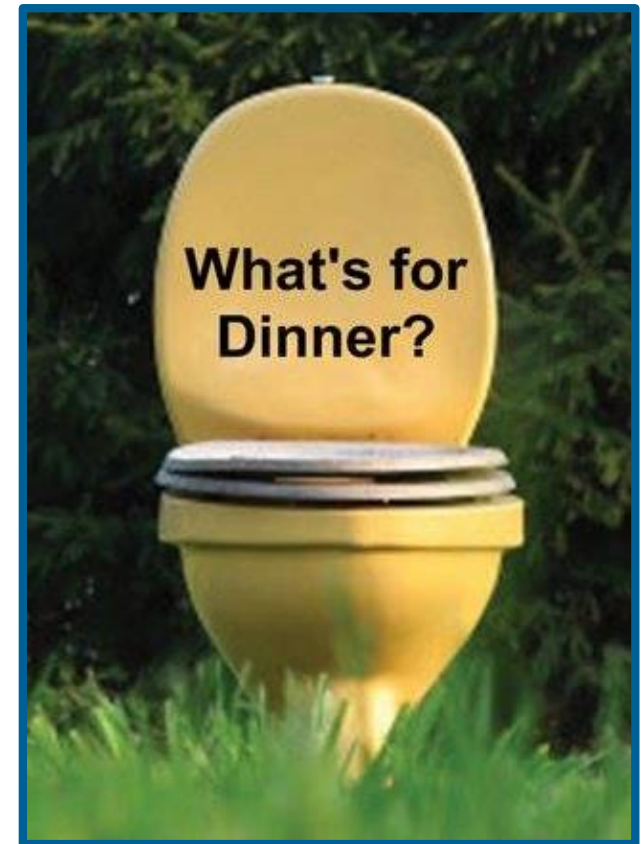
Current State of Affairs

- Freedom of Information requests, active social media campaign
- Standstill with residents, local First Nations and government
- BC Ministry of Environment has struck a Technical Working Group which is in the process of developing a workplan, but has participation by First Nations.
- TNRD passes zoning amendments for agricultural land and biosolids
- UBCM resolution for regulatory changes



Current State of Affairs

- Existing biosolids clients in Nicola Valley go without
- Elected officials questioning biosolids safety
- Significant re-allocation of biosolids within existing projects, including out of province landfilling
- Technology providers capitalize on the opportunity – pyrolysis, dried fuel
- Current federal election...



Engagement for Relationships

Stakeholder and First Nations Engagement and Consultation

- Inform stakeholders prior to, during, and after project operations
- Hold information sessions regarding the fertilization/reclamation program
- Host open houses and tours at our application sites
- Respond to queries about our projects within 24 hours of receipt
- Provide all project records upon request



Nicola Valley Engagement 2015

Throughout the Nicola Valley issue:

- Weekly meetings, field tours
- 500% increase in First Nations related enquiries
- Increased pressure to demonstrate safety through sampling and testing
- Increased pressure to provide “unbiased” information to the media
- Educating and addressing misinformation
- Informing our clients



Remember OK Ranch?

Kicking it up a Notch...

- Involvement with local and regional media
- Increased involvement with First Nations Bands
- Monitoring in conjunction with First Nations
- Oh yeah, those research plots...
- Tours of the site with Interior Health Authority, First Nations Health Authority and local First Nations
- Ministry of Environment inspections



The Litmus Paper Test

Has our Engagement passed the test?

- Existing projects not in the Nicola Valley continue
- Approved project sites within the Nicola Valley have not started
- 100% of our generator clients' biosolids are being managed
- There is definitely an increased awareness of biosolids



Learning Opportunities – Part 1

- Robust biosolids Contractor/Consultant procurement
- Own your Product
- It's not “my Product” or “my Agency”
- Reactive Involvement – when do you engage?
- Analysis Paralysis – gather, study, gather, study...
- Science as the only Belief system (In who do we trust?)
- Hiding behind Regulations and Regulators
- Regulator understanding and support of Regulations/BMPs
- Stakeholders exist within your organization (look up)

Learning Opportunities – Part 2

- Understand, appreciate and plan for your organizational communication limitations
- Responding to Questions
- Do you have something to Hide?
- Condition of Institutional Knowledge and Experience
- Underestimating the Power of Social Media
- Project-specific Communications
- Underestimating the Power of Social License
- People are People
- Don't think it can never happen - It *can* happen to you...

Website Links

Organic Matter Recycling Regulation

http://www.bclaws.ca/Recon/document/ID/freeside/18_2002

Biosolids Best Management Guidelines

<http://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/environment/waste-management/recycling/landappguidelines.pdf>

Friends of Nicola Valley Facebook Page

<https://www.facebook.com/FriendsoftheNicolaValley>

Friends of Nicola Valley Petition

<https://www.change.org/p/friends-of-the-nicola-valley-stop-the-use-of-sewage-sludge-bio-waste-for-composting-and-spreading-as-fertilizer-in-the-nicola-valley>

Biosolids Battle BC

<http://www.biosolidsbc.com/>



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Questions?

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