



## **Fraser Basin Council Releases Its Sustainability Snapshot 2 Report**

**Vancouver, BC (November 29, 2004)** –The Fraser Basin Council has just released its *State of the Fraser Basin Report: Sustainability Snapshot 2* and announced the winners of the 2004 Sustainability Awards at the 4<sup>th</sup> biennial State of the Fraser Basin Conference. The conference, held in Vancouver November 26 and 27, attracted more than 350 delegates.

### **The State of the Fraser Basin Report: Sustainability Snapshot 2**

The *Sustainability Snapshot 2* report examines 17 key sustainability issues and also profiles issues of concern in each of the five Fraser Basin regions - Upper Fraser, Cariboo-Chilcotin, Thompson, Fraser Valley and Greater Vancouver/Sea To Sky. The wide-ranging economic, social and environmental issues covered in the report are all interrelated and must be considered when planning for a sustainable Fraser River Basin.

First the good news. If BC were a country, our life expectancy would rank #2, just behind Japan. More of us are in better shape physically. On a per capita basis, we are using less energy, consuming less water and generating less waste. The quality of our air is generally improving, with lower levels of ozone present.

We grow 50 per cent of our food right here in BC, much of it on rich agricultural land in the Fraser Valley and other parts of the Fraser Basin. Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal relations are improving in many ways. The lower Fraser and Thompson regions have diversified their economies. More of us have a higher education, are employed and are making more money than ever before.

But the news is definitely not all good. Adult and childhood obesity has increased, and diabetes is also on the rise. Due to large increases in population, total use of energy and water has grown, as has the total amount of waste we produce. Particulate levels in some Interior regions are still too high due, in part, to beehive burners and forest fires.

Land in the Agricultural Land Reserve has decreased in four of five regions. Progress on First Nations treaties is slower than expected. The Upper Fraser and Cariboo-Chilcotin regions are still highly dependent on forestry. Some salmon stocks are declining. Many smaller communities are facing declines in population, while large urban centres must grapple with increased traffic, pollution and sprawl. Almost 500,000 people now live in households that make less than \$20,000 per year, and homelessness has increased.

And, alarmingly, climate change may be influencing everything from the spread of the mountain pine beetle to increased forest fires, poor air quality and low salmon survival rates due to higher water temperatures.

The Fraser Basin Council's vision for the Fraser Basin is a place where "social well-being is supported by a vibrant economy and sustained by a healthy environment." The Council believes that sustainability works, and to that end, it partners with other individuals and organizations on a wide range of economic, environmental and social issues and programs in order to advance sustainability.

**To download the report, go to: [www.fraserbasin.bc.ca](http://www.fraserbasin.bc.ca)**

**To request printed copies of the report, give us a call: 604.488.5350**

Contact: Raymond McAllister  
Fraser Basin Council Communications  
Tel: 604.488.5356  
Email: [rmcallister@fraserbasin.bc.ca](mailto:rmcallister@fraserbasin.bc.ca)