

BC's sustainability purchasing network

by Summit staff

THE FRASER RIVER, stretching 1400 km from the Rockies to Richmond, BC, supports 65 species of fish (including salmon) and hundreds of species of birds, mammals, plants and trees. It is home to two out of three British Columbians and 80 percent of the province's economy is generated in the region. Taking care of the river is of immense importance.

"In 1997, community groups, business and four orders of government, including First Nations, came together to create the Fraser Basin Council, whose mandate is to ensure that the decisions made now will protect and advance the Basin's social, economic and environmental sustainability into the future." (www.fraserbasin.bc.ca)

One of the many initiatives sponsored by the council is the Sustainability Purchasing Network (SPN), established in 2005.

According to the website, SPN "represents a consortium of BC-based sustainability purchasing practitioners, primarily located in Greater Vancouver, whose purpose is to help organizations move along the path from inception to advanced sustainability purchasing practice... while supporting the growth of the sustainable enterprise sector." Participants turned to the Web as a home for the resource material and information.

On June 7th of this year, potential end-users of the SPN website met to define the website requirements. Bell Olympic Services Group (Vancouver) and the Bell Delta Center (Toronto) facilitated the session. You can see the discussion and results online at www.fraserbasin.bc.ca/programs/documents/SPN2006/web/framepages/index.htm. Bell Cana-


da, Hemlock Printers, and the City of Vancouver Sustainability Group also supported the event. In addition to the Fraser Basin Council, long-term supporters of SPN include Vancity Credit Union, BC Hydro and Mountain Equipment Co-op.

The group defines sustainability purchasing as the process used by organizations to buy supplies or services taking into account the:

- best value for money (price, quality, availability, functionality);
- environmental aspects over the life cycle of products; and
- social aspects (e.g., local jobs, community impact, working conditions).

According to the SPN website, SPN offers or will offer the following services:

- best practice case studies on sustainability purchasing;
- the business case for sustainability purchasing;
- tools for advancing sustainability purchasing policy and practice;
- training workshops;
- practitioner learning circles and online dialogues to share best practices;
- collaborative projects such as buyers clubs, product fairs and initiatives to support economic sustainability;
- a newsletter containing events, resources, tools and updates.

Membership is open to BC organizations with an interest in sustainability purchasing, whether private, public, or non-profit sector. Information can be obtained at spn@fraserbasin.bc.ca. 

GREEN Procurement

Summit magazine in cooperation with TerraChoice Environmental Marketing introduces



- Have you incorporated "green" considerations into your procurement policies?
- Do you have tools and training to help your procurement managers "buy green"?
- Are you involved in procurement projects that will show "green" results?
- Has "greener" procurement become an essential part of your supplier relationships?

To get more information on the award and criterion for submissions, please contact us at publisher@summitconnects.com

