



*For immediate release*

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## **B.C. First Nations technology team wins international award**

### **WaterKeeper Team Wins Award at 2011 Serious Games Conference**

West Vancouver – An international panel of technology experts has recognized a B.C First Nations multimedia team for their development of WaterKeeper, an interactive 3 dimensional (3D) training tool designed to support operators of small community water systems to provide clean and safe drinking water for First Nations communities. The award was given as part of the International Serious Play awards, a program “distinguishing superior examples of corporate, military, healthcare and school/at home” learning tools at the 2011 Serious Games Conference held on August 23 – 25, 2011 in Redmond, Washington ([www.seriousplayconference.com](http://www.seriousplayconference.com)).

The team worked under the guidance of the Indigenous Adult Higher Learning Association, an association of 40 Aboriginal-controlled adult and post-secondary education institutes in British Columbia. The WaterKeeper program was funded by Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada to provide an interactive learning tool that solves real-world problems through the use of an extensive 3D model. For example, the tool offers support to water operators to analyze problems with a pumping system.

Once an operator is certified, WaterKeeper provides the operator community with an online communication tool. Every operator is identified on a shared Google map with contact information and fields of interest or expertise.

The WaterKeeper program launched in 2009 and is available to all communities in online or CD ROM versions. The online portion will soon be featured on the BC First Nations Portal (<http://fnbc.info>).

The Auditor General of Canada’s June 2011 report reiterates that “access to safe drinking water is vital to the health of all Canadians”, and “as of March 2010, more than half of water systems on [First Nations] reserves still posed a medium or high risk to the community members they served.”

### **Math Portion Used in Resource Guide for Grade 8/9**

A major chapter in the training module covers the necessary math required to run a safe water system. These interactive 3D math segments have been adopted by the First Nations Education Steering Committee as a resource for Math 8 & 9 teachers and their students throughout the province.

**For more information:**

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**About IAHLA**

*Since 2003, IAHLA has supported and represented Aboriginal-controlled adult and post-secondary education institutes in British Columbia. For more information, please visit [www.iahla.ca](http://www.iahla.ca)*

**About FNESC**

*Established in 1992, the First Nations Education Steering Committee is an independent society led by representatives of BC First Nations communities. FNESC is committed to achieving quality education for all First Nations students in British Columbia. For more information, please visit: [www.fnesc.ca](http://www.fnesc.ca)*



From left to right: Nolan Allan, Buck Nelson, Melina Laboucan, Phillip Stewart, Heather Bohn, Daniel Smith