

# B. C. TAP WATER ALLIANCE

Caring for, Monitoring, and Protecting  
British Columbia's Community Water  
Supply Sources

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To: Sunshine Coast Regional District Board

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## No Timber Sales in the McNeill Lake Watershed Reserve

The BC Tap Water Alliance applauds the Sunshine Coast Regional District's initiative to protect a Pender Harbour drinking water source, the McNeill Lake Watershed Reserve, from further commercial logging and disposition.

Watershed Reserves established under the *Land Act*, like Ecological Reserves, should not be included in the Provincial Timber Harvesting Land Base (sometimes referred to as the Working Forest) used to calculate the Annual Allowable Cut. The secretive inclusion of community drinking watersheds in the Timber Harvesting Land Base by the Ministry of Forests (newly established as a single-purpose agency) began in the early 1980s during the second Social Credit administration (December 1975 – September 1991). From the early 1980s to the advent of the *Forest Practices Code* in 1995, and to this day, Watershed Reserves have undergone numerous processes intended to conceal both their purpose and the reasons for legislative protection from commercial and industrial developments.

Although numerous investigations of this issue have occurred since the late 1990s, the BC Liberal administration (2001 and on) continues to defy logic and ignore the issue. BC Timber Sales continues to advertise timber sales in community watersheds, supported by controversial provincial legislation, despite ongoing protestations from communities throughout the province.

It is important for the Sunshine Coast Regional District to continue to take a strong and conscientious position on the protection of its community drinking water sources, not only because the protection of these sources was once the shining policy of the provincial government, stoutly defended by provincial health officers, but also because community watersheds are being 're-protected'. The sources of drinking water for more than half of British Columbia's inhabitants (56%), both Metro Vancouver (1999) and Victoria's (1994) watersheds, have been re-protected. Similar re-protection policies were recently invoked for Seattle's drinking watershed in Washington State, and for Portland City's in Oregon State. Protection for the remaining 44% of the population's drinking water sources is a critical issue that needs to be raised and vigorously debated in the months leading to the next provincial election.

A report on McNeill Lake Watershed Reserve will be available shortly. In the meantime, we hope that BC Timber Sales will honour the Regional District's legitimate concerns (as water purveyor) about industrial activity in local community watersheds and delete all proposed timber sales in the McNeill Lake Watershed Reserve.

Sincerely,

Will Koop, Coordinator.

cc. Elphinstone Logging Focus

Norm Kempe, B.C. Timber Sales, Planner, Campbell River

Don Hudson, Manager, B.C. Timber Sales, Campbell River

Doug Konkin, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Forests

Nicholas Simons, MLA, Powell River-Sunshine Coast

For Backgrounder on Watershed Reserves, and links to recent media on this issue, the following link: <http://www.bctwa.org/McNeillLake-Backgrounder.html>