

Joint Media Release

May 27, 2003

Interfor Withdraws From the Community Watersheds

In a welcome gesture of goodwill to the people of the Sunshine Coast, International Forest Products (Interfor) has informed the Sunshine Coast Regional District and the Sunshine Coast Conservation Association that it is dropping all logging approvals in the Chapman and Gray Community Watersheds and deactivating their road access. Following this sudden about-face, Operations Manager Gerhard Pokrandt (Interfor, Campbell River Division) expressed his hope that there will be better relations between Interfor and the communities of the Sunshine Coast than there has been in the past.

Resource use in the community watersheds has been controversial since the regional district was incorporated in 1967. In the intervening years, a solid consensus evolved that local governments should have authority over all land use activities in the community watersheds, for the purpose of protecting the public interest in a clean source of affordable drinking water. Below are some of the key events in the history of the watershed.

November 28, 2002. The Sechelt Indian Band and the Sunshine Coast Regional District sign an historic accord to pursue the establishment of a shared authority over all land uses in the Chapman/Gray community watersheds.

May 29, 2002. A 5000 signature citizen's petition, opposing logging and mining in the Chapman/Gray Community Watershed and supporting community control, is delivered to MLA Harold Long and presented to the legislature.

May 2, 1998. Watershed Management Referendum - 87.6% of ballots say "no" to management of the Chapman/Gray Community Watershed by the Ministry of Forests under the Integrated Watershed Management Plan.

Patricia Braithwaite of the Water First Society: "We commend International Forest Products for responding to public pressure with this important initiative. As public interest advocates we are satisfied that the will of the public does prevail and cannot be ignored by any government, corporation or party."

This concession marks a major change in direction and provides a new opportunity for the community to regain control of this vital resource. We urge the Sunshine Coast Regional District and the Sechelt Indian Band to act quickly and in concert to secure the public interest in the community drinking watersheds.

Contact information:

Angela Kroning, Sunshine Coast Water First Society (604) 886-8441

Daniel Bouman, Sunshine Coast Conservation Association (604) 886-8325

For background and historical information visit the SCCA website: **www.thescca.ca** current projects/
submission to the Drinking Water Protection Plan Review Panel

Sunshine Coast Water First Society

Thank You

On the occasion of Interfor's withdrawal from the Chapman/Gray community watersheds, the Sunshine Coast Water First Society wishes to gratefully acknowledge the following for their efforts on behalf of the community's interest in affordable clean drinking water:

- Chief Gary Feschuk, the Sechelt Indian Band Government (SIBG) and the Elders of the Sechelt Nation
- The current Directors and staff of the Sunshine Coast Regional District for working with the SIBG to achieve the Watershed Accord
- The past Board members of the Sunshine Coast Regional District (including representatives from municipalities of Gibsons and Sechelt) for having the vision to contest the issue and allow the public will to be documented.
- The Council of Canadians, Sunshine Coast Conservation Association, Tetrahedron Alliance, Twuanek Ratepayers Association, Elphinstone Electors Association, Roberts Creek Community Association, Group of Seven Community Associations
- All the other groups that comprise our diverse community, such as the Raging Grannies and the Earth Day Committee
- Many businesses and individuals that contributed to the cost of various campaigns
- Finally, the thousands of people that raised the issue of watershed protection in every possible venue, wrote letters, voted in the Watershed Management Referendum, circulated and signed petitions.

As public interest advocates we are convinced that the will of the public can prevail