

B. C. TAP WATER ALLIANCE

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

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B.C. TAP WATER ALLIANCE SHOCKED AT RECENT SUPREME COURT DECISION TO ALLOW LOGGING IN COMMUNITY WATERSHED RESERVES

Last week's Supreme Court judgment on the Valhalla Wilderness Society's complaint against the provincial government and Slocan Forest Products, over imminent logging in their community Watershed Reserves, concluded that the mandate and authority of the Ministry of Environment, Lands, and Parks is, in fact, non-existent: "... the Minister acting under the Land Act has no administrative power over lands in Provincial forests Only the Minister of Forests has that power."

Will Koop, Coordinator of the B.C. Tap Water Alliance, commented: "Something is very wrong here. Perhaps Justice Paris did not have access to the abundant and available documentation on this matter. The years of planning by government departments since the 1970's, to both establish these Watershed Reserves and to implement community watershed planning processes, have been completely overlooked in this decision. The administration of and responsibility for Section 12 community Watershed Reserves is with the Minister of Environment."

Justice Paris' ruling is a blow to the future protection of approximately 200 community watershed reserves within British Columbia's Provincial Forests. Roads and logging have consistently degraded community water supplies. The consequences of this ruling are contrary to the government's duty which is to protect the health and well being of all British Columbians.

Because of Justice Paris' decision, communities in the Slocan Valley, who are now forced to take measures to protect their Watershed Reserves, may soon become the latest "enemies" of British Columbia. It is critical for someone to appeal this decision.