

B. C. TAP WATER ALLIANCE

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

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News Release

B.C. COMMUNITY FOREST CONFERENCE UNDER COMMUNITY FIRE

On the last weekend of May, 2008, the Sunshine Coast's community forest (Sechelt Community Projects Inc.) is hosting the 7th annual conference of the B.C. Community Forest Association. Sunshine Coast residents intend to hold a friendly rally outside the conference to voice their concerns about the Association's host.

In a recently released 100-page report by the B.C. Tap Water Alliance (May 20, 2008), "*The Community*" *Forest Trojan Horse*, case history details the controversies surrounding the Sunshine Coast community forest since 2003. The report describes both the provincial government's Ministry of Forests and the forest industry's brazen efforts to include two of the Sunshine Coast Regional District's drinking watersheds in the community forest tenure against the wishes of "the community". The report also investigates the questionable backgrounds of a number of directors on the community forest board, its operations manager Kevin Davie (the provincial Association's vice-president) and the District of Sechelt's Mayor Cam Reid.

For about forty years, the Regional District and its residents have steadfastly struggled with the provincial government calling for protection of Crown and private lands in the Chapman Creek and Gray Creek Watershed Reserves. After the unambiguous results of a 1998 Sunshine Coast regional referendum to end logging in these Reserves, and the subsequent development of a watershed protection Accord between the Regional District and the Sechelt Indian Government from 2002 to 2005, the B.C. Liberal government's Minister of Forests and Range nevertheless included the controversial watersheds in the community forest tenure.

In March, 2008, some three years after the Sechelt Indian Band withdrew as a community forest partner, the Band notified the B.C. Liberal government that the two Watershed Reserves were under Interim Protection measures and requested the Reserves be immediately removed from the community forest. As a result, Agriculture and Lands Minister Pat Bell (in charge of First Nations negotiations) notified the community forest directors that the two community watersheds were being axed from the community forest tenure.

"The motivations and actions of the District of Sechelt, community forest directors, and the provincial government have been deplorable. They have cast a huge shadow over the Association and the vital concept of "community" forestry", said Will Koop, author of the report, and Coordinator of the B.C. Tap Water Alliance. "The B.C. Community Forest Association should carefully assess the failure of the Sunshine Coast community forest to openly engage "the community" in its planning, and seek to implement a new binding policy that excludes community drinking watersheds (referred to as "high conservation value forests") from all community forest tenures."

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(For a copy of the report, see website address above.)