

The B.C. Tap Water Alliance and the Association of B.C. Professional Foresters

(Renamed the Association of B.C. Forest Professionals)

During the provincial public review and meetings concerning the *Drinking Water Protection Act* (January to February, 2001), a letter was sent to the Association of BC Professional Foresters (renamed as the Association of BC Forest Professionals in 2003) just before their annual meeting. This letter resulted in a series of events, described below.

February 15, 2001

Faxed to: (604) 687-3264

Mr. Brian Robinson,
President,
Association of B.C. Professional Foresters.
Suite 1201, 1130 West Pender St, V6E-4A4.

Mr. Robinson,

We would like to take this opportunity to impart a very important concern and request to you and your fellow Association of B.C. Professional Foresters at your upcoming 53rd annual general meeting in Kamloops next week. This matter specifically relates to drinking watersheds in British Columbia.

Our organization, with the growing daily support of many others, is advocating the legislative protection of drinking watersheds. As you are aware, the primary activity in these consumptive drainages, in what some presently refer to as “the working forest”, is related to industrial forestry through the concept of integrated resource management: road building, harvesting, and silviculture. These activities are influenced by the government’s inappropriate application of forested lands currently under the Allowable Annual Cut in drinking watersheds.

Relatedly, your professional Association is quite cognizant of the wide and persistent public criticism and debate over the last few decades of these activities in drinking watersheds. That is why Victoria and Greater Vancouver, which together constitute over half of British Columbia’s residents, have discontinued logging programs in their drinking water sources. For example, the following resolution passed by the Greater Vancouver Regional District on November 10, 1999:

1. The primary purpose of Greater Vancouver's watersheds is to provide clean, safe water.
2. The watersheds will be managed to reflect and advance the Region's commitment to the environmental stewardship and protection of those lands and their biological diversity.
3. The Region's management plan will be based upon the minimum intervention absolutely necessary to achieve the Board's objectives.
4. The management plan will contain policies to return areas disturbed by human activities as close as possible to the pre-disturbance state consistent with the primary goal of protecting water quality.
5. The decision-making process will be transparent and open to the public.

Over the last thirty years there have also been many resolutions passed by the Union of B.C. Municipalities related to the controversy over logging in drinking watersheds on Crown and private lands. The B.C. Medical Association passed a resolution in 1998 to “recommend to all regional health districts in BC that they protect their water supply.” Throughout the 1900s, Medical Health Officers have often objected to resource activities in the public’s drinking water sources.

Your Association is not only on record for defending industrial forestry in British Columbia’s drinking watersheds (for instance, submission #37, and related submissions, in 1991, for the Greater Vancouver Water Districts public review of logging in the watersheds), but a number of your members are involved in commercial forestry activities in drinking watersheds in a variety of ways.

We are entreating your Association to reconsider its position and help advocate single use - that is the full protection from resource activities in British Columbia's drinking watersheds. We are therefore urging your association to pass a resolution at your upcoming annual general meeting to protect British Columbia drinking watersheds from resource use activities.

Sincerely,

Will Koop, Provincial Drinking Watershed Campaigner, Society Promoting Environmental Conservation (SPEC).

cc. Premier Ujjal Dosanjh

Hon. Gordon Wilson, Minister of Forests

Hon. Ian Waddell, Minister of Environment, Lands and Parks

Hon. Jim Doyle, Minister of Municipal Affairs

Hon. Corky Evans, Minister of Health

Perry Kendall, Provincial Health Officer

Dr. Shaun Peck, Deputy Provincial Health Officer

Larry Pedersen, Provincial Chief Forester

Hon. Gordon Campbell, Liberal Opposition Leader

Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs

Interior Alliance of B.C.

B.C. Regional Districts and Municipalities

British Columbia Environmental Network

Council of Canadians

Media

March 5, 2001

Mr. Will Koop
Provincial Drinking Watershed Campaigner
Society Promoting Environmental Conservation
2150 Maple Street
Vancouver BC. V6J 3T3

Dear Mr. Koop:

Thank you for your letter of 15 February, addressed to our then president, Brian Robinson, urging that a resolution be tabled at our annual meeting concerning watersheds. At the request of our Council, I am writing to advise of the disposition of your letter.

Council considered your letter at its meeting on 21 February. ABCPF bylaws allow two kinds of resolutions to come before annual meeting, business resolutions and advisory resolutions. Business resolutions must be put forward by members and must be provided to the association no less than 45 days in advance of the meeting so they can be included in the agenda of the annual meeting which must be provided to members well in advance of the meeting itself. Advance notice of advisory resolutions is not required but they must still be put forward by members. Accordingly, due to time considerations and the fact that you are not a member, it was not possible for the matter to be presented at the annual meeting as either a business or advisory resolution.

Council did decide to refer your letter to our Stewardship Advisory Committee with a request that they bring a recommendation forward for Council's consideration at its next meeting on 29-30 March.

Sincerely, E.V. (Van) Scoffield, R.P.F., Executive Director.

cc. Premier Ujjal Dosanjh

Hon. Gordon Wilson, Minister of Forests

Hon. Ian Waddell, Minister of Environment, Lands and Parks

Hon. Jim Doyle, Minister of Municipal Affairs

Hon. Corky Evans, Minister of Health

Perry Kendall, Provincial Health Officer

Larry Pedersen, Provincial Chief Forester

Hon. Gordon Campbell, Liberal Opposition Leader

Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs

Interior Alliance of B.C.

B.C. Regional Districts and Municipalities

British Columbia Environmental Network

Council of Canadians

As a result of the February 15, 2001 letter (also found under *Press Releases and Correspondence* in the home page of this website) the ABCPF contacted the Tap Water Alliance on June 15, 2001 for us to provide a 700 word article in the ABCPF newsletter, *The Forum*, which was scheduled to appear in their September/ October 2001 issue:

I am writing in response to your letter of February 15, 2001 requesting the Association of BC Professional Foresters help advocate single use in BC's drinking watersheds. Our Executive Director, Van Scofield, RPF wrote you back explaining that the letter was referred to the association's Stewardship Advisory Committee.

Council has endorsed the committee's recommendation which is to request from you a 700 word article for our professional magazine Forum, highlighting your concerns. We would place your article along side another article which would be a fact based article highlighting the current government legislation and policies governing the protection of drinking water. Both these articles would be preceded by a short introductory piece highlighting the issue and why it is important to our members.

As a result, we initially submitted an article, composed of a series of quotations by professional foresters on the issue of logging and drinking water supply watersheds. The communications manager of the ABCPF, Dwight Yochim, did not approve of our format, and requested that we make an alternate submission. After a lengthy discussion on the telephone, we decided to make a second submission, with the proviso in the second article, that we print the first article on our website, as shown below.

On September 21, 2001, we learned that the ABCPF editorial board decided to postpone printing our article in the September/October Forum issue until they consider featuring it in a future edition on the topic of "watershed management", a euphemism by foresters and government for industrial and agricultural activities in domestic watersheds (watershed management may also be defined as management for "single use", or complete conservation for water supply purposes only). The ABCPF also requested that the provincial government present an article on this topic, which was supposed to have run alongside our presentation. The ABCPF Editorial Board will be running our final, or third submission (below), in their upcoming newsletter for March/April, which was approved for printing on February 1, 2002.

First Submission (July 3, 2001, by Will Koop, Coordinator, B.C. Tap Water Alliance)

Thank you for the invitation to present a short article for the ABCPF newsletter on the issue of resource activities in domestic watersheds - an issue close to my heart.

I wish to express my real concern about the role the Association has had in the ruination of many watersheds in British Columbia, which are the sources of our drinking water. Following many years of research, I have learned, much to my dismay, that helpless 'ordinary' citizens have been systematically stripped of their right to the most basic of all needs, pure water. The following ten quotations are intended to describe that process in your profession's own words.

Much of the remaining mature timber in the District is in the watersheds of creeks which are the source of somebody's water supply.... In many areas we will not be able to supply local industry's needs unless we can invade the watersheds. (J.R. Johnston, Nelson Regional Office, Ministry of Forests [MoF], July 17, 1964)

Mr. Apsey [Deputy Minister of Forests] noted that his ministry was becoming aware of growing public concern over other use of lands around watersheds. He noted that there was the danger of losing flexibility and returning to a single use concept of land. He suggested that Forests be the lead ministry in developing a project to look at planning and public involvement for watershed plans. (Environment and Land Use Technical Committee, Minutes, March 9, 1981)

Vancouver and Victoria watersheds are prime examples of viability of logging in our arguments with other cities and districts. (A.C. Markus, MoF, August 31, 1981)

Government should issue a formal public statement confirming the principle that community watersheds should be managed on an integrated use basis.... The liability issue will be a hot one with our forest industry friends. Should we touch base with our legal friends? (W. Young, Chief Forester, February 10, 1982)

I feel that it is extremely important that we do a top notch job in assisting with the development of the Nelson City Watershed Plan as ... it will serve as an example to the myriad of other watersheds that will require forest management development activities in the next 10 to 20 years in this region.... it is very important that executive understand the importance of the Nelson City Watershed Plan in developing the remaining watersheds in the Nelson Region. (D.L. Oswald, Nelson Regional Office, MOF, Dec.24, 1982)

It is our belief that the Nelson Forest Region should continue to read back to the water licencees the exact terms of their licences, and should in no case accept any responsibility for maintaining water quality or quantity.... If protection of water quality, quantity and timing of flow must be the primary consideration in industrial operations in domestic watersheds, then we may as well give up the idea of logging in them.... In all probability, the resource that we licence and harvest, respectively, is of far more value to the province than is the water resource.... It appears that most people in this area rely on well water, and it would be to the benefit of the Province to avoid an increase in the use of surface water supplies. (John Szauer, Regional Manager, Cariboo Forest Region, MoF, March 10, 1986)

The Slokan Valley Watershed Alliance has continued to leave (1) decision making, (2) liability protection, (3) standardized inventory procedures, and (4) standardized risk analysis procedures

on the table. We are of the opinion that the first two are non-negotiable and this must be accepted. The latter two continuing discussions will lead nowhere. In summary, push has come to shove. We have carried out our responsibilities under an integrated management principle to develop a satisfactory IWMP and now intend to implement it. (R.R. Tozer, Nelson Regional Manager, MoF, October 31, 1986)

We have consciously reduced the importance of water management from “the primary” concern to “a primary” concern.... To deal with water management in this context as the exclusive and primary concern would be at odds with the philosophy of integrated resource management. (D.A Currie, Planning Forester, Integrated Resources Branch, MoF, November 29, 1988)

A public meeting is one of the least desirable ways to review the details of a plan. ... It may be possible to avoid a public meeting entirely if the Mayor and the LCA agree that continued specific discussion is more fruitful (eg., field trip, workshop). (Ladysmith watershed public meeting: Gordon K. Erlandson, Integrated Resources Branch, MoF, November 23, 1989 and February 5, 1990)

We support the initiative to revamp the Water Act and institute a more defined planning process ... Water Management Plans must not be accorded any special privileges. (J.R. Cuthbert, Chief Forester, April 10, 1990)

Second Submission (submitted July 11, 2001)

By way of introduction, the B.C. Tap Water Alliance was formed in 1996, by citizens from Greater Victoria, the Sunshine Coast, Greater Vancouver, and the Slocan Valley. We were all deeply concerned about logging activities in our drinking watersheds. Since that time, we have conducted research and have sought public support to change government policy and end logging in domestic watersheds. As many of your readers are aware, logging has ended in the Greater Victoria, Greater Vancouver, and the Sunshine Coast Regional District’s watersheds. More recently, we provided a lengthy critique of this issue in our submission to the government’s public review and implementation of the *Drinking Water Protection Act* (www.alternatives.com/bctwa).

Due to our letter last February to the ABCPF to pass a motion at its annual meeting to support our position to end commercial logging in drinking water sources, we were invited to present an article to your newsletter. However, your communications officer disapproved of our initial article, comprised mostly of quotations from foresters which summarized the move from watersheds reserved for community water supply to the policy of multiple-use, so we changed it (view the original at our website). The officer was concerned that the quotes were out-dated, that it was not descriptive, and that we have missed the point that the business of logging in domestic watersheds has significantly changed since the implementation of the *Forest Practices Code*.

The point of the selected quotations from foresters employed in the Ministry of Forests was to demonstrate the following key concerns which not only relate to the way in which public policy and use of domestic watersheds was altered, but on the public conduct of foresters. The quotations detailed that:

- (1) the policy of “single use”, i.e. for drinking water only, as opposed to commercial/industrial uses under the banner of “multiple use”, or “integrated resource management”, was once the norm for domestic watersheds;
- (2) due to accelerated logging activities, protected domestic watersheds were targeted to further supply the timber industry;
- (3) previous government policy under the Ministry of the Environment, which placed primary importance on domestic watersheds, was “consciously” reduced by the Ministry of Forests;
- (4) the Chief Forester wished to revise the Water Act to incorporate multiple resource use in domestic watersheds;
- (5) logging in sources of large population centers, such as Vancouver, Victoria, Nelson was advocated as public relations exercises intended to convince the public of the safety of logging in domestic watersheds;
- (6) revenues from logging and other uses outweigh the social benefits associated with a protected watershed regarding water quality and effects to water users;
- (7) logging negatively impacts water quality;
- (8) liability for damage caused by logging in domestic watersheds was a sensitive issue for timber licensees;
- (9) public meetings regarding proposed logging plans in a domestic watershed were privately discouraged.

Through our research we discovered that provincial legislation to protect drinking water sources was altered and diminished to later accommodate commercial uses, at the long term expense against the protestation of local water users. There are decades worth of correspondence, reports, and newspaper articles which document the public’s concern on this issue.

Furthermore, the *Forest Practices Code*, which is an extension of the mandate to continue logging in domestic watersheds, does not protect drinking water sources, it merely imposes a few more limitations on forest practices, but places the watersheds in the calculation of the allowable annual cut and under the discretion of District Managers. *The Forest Practices Code* encourages uses, such as cattle grazing, mining, etc., activities which undeniably impact water quality.

From our research, we have come to the inescapable conclusion that foresters are responsible, to a large measure, for having promoted commercial logging in watersheds over the last 40 years, most of which were in an undisturbed state. We therefore strongly urge foresters in your organization to reconsider their position to log in domestic watersheds, the cumulative impacts of which have brought unnecessary costs (health, fiscal, legal, rehabilitative, and social) to the hundreds of watersheds and millions of water users. With the advent of the public review in March 1999 by the Auditor General, the Walkerton Inquiry, public audits such as those conducted by the Sierra Legal Defence Fund, and similar reports from the United States, the public is becoming well educated about how intact watersheds (as they once were) not only provide the highest water quality and dependable flows, but are also extremely cost effective providers of this most basic of necessities.”

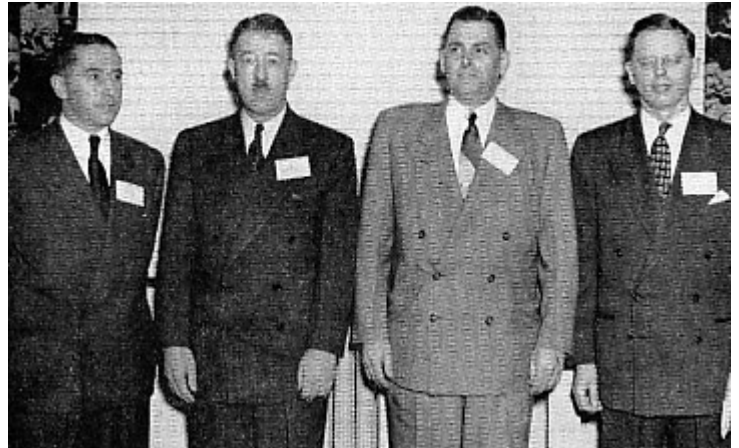
Third (final) Submission - (approved February 1, 2002)

Foresters should be leading the way

By Will Koop

February 27, 2002—the date the Association of BC Professional Foresters’ annual conference begins in Nanaimo—marks the 50th anniversary of the start of logging in British Columbia’s domestic watersheds.

In 1952, at the Fifth BC Natural Resources Conference in Victoria, a resolution was passed challenging provincial policies and legislation that mandated “single use” and “full virgin forest canopy” for the protection of domestic watersheds, redefining it with an “emphasis on forest management on a sustained yield basis.” During the conference, a forestry panel, including Victoria’s new watershed forester and the dean of forestry from the University of



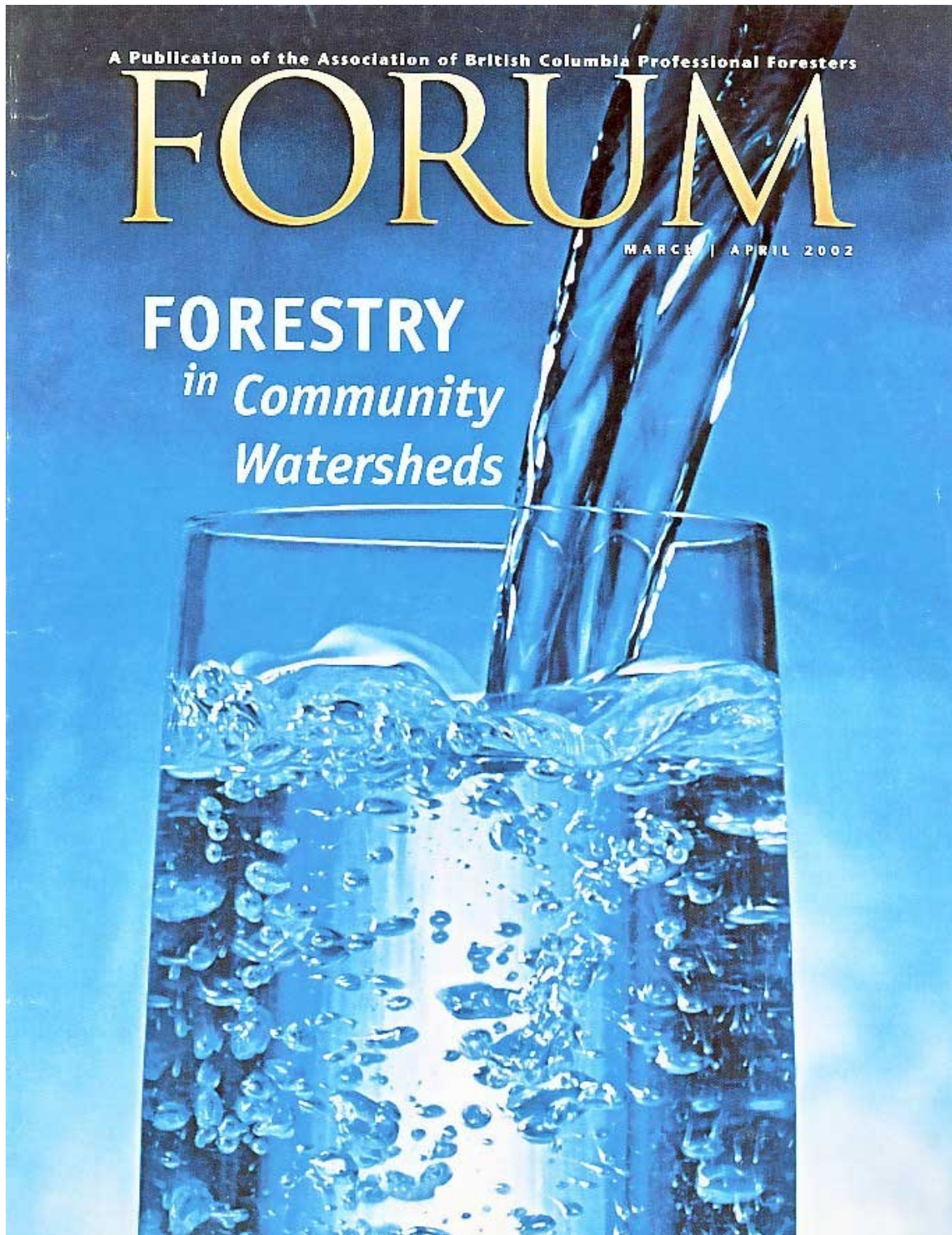
1952 conference forestry panel photo, from left to right: H.J. Hodgins, consulting forester (forester just hired to direct logging operations in the Victoria watershed); K.G. Bensom, Forest Products Laboratory Division, Forestry Branch, Canada; Lowell Besley, Dean of Forestry, University of British Columbia; and T.G. Wright (Panel convenor), forester, Canadian Forest Products Ltd. Note: photo not included in ABCPF newsletter.

British Columbia, presented arguments for the “intensification” of forest management in BC. Following that, a forestry consultant [A.J. Saunders, Victoria] also forwarded a resolution which stated that forest management of domestic watersheds should be made by “those best qualified to judge, i.e. professional engineers and foresters.” For the remainder of the 1950s, government bureaucrats and top foresters worked on the inside to steer the provincial ship in that direction. By 1960, instructions were dispatched to all forest district administrators and rangers inside the BC Forest Service to make the necessary changes. And, not surprisingly, communities throughout the province began to object, the acrimony of which led to the creation of a provincial task force in 1972 to examine the widespread complaints. After consultations with BC communities, the task force created more than 300 Watershed Reserves, leaving hundreds more without such designations.

Despite the task force’s initiatives, and sharp concerns by health administrators for industries to be kept out of the watersheds, the BC Forest Service escalated logging in domestic watersheds. There was little the public could do, as government ministries and agencies chanted their new mantra about integrated resource management.

When public criticism intensified and questions regarding the liability of companies logging in these areas were raised in the 1980s, public relations schemes conducted by foresters became a tool to convince the public that logging “enhanced” or “improved” water quality and flows.

Foresters stated that logging in the Vancouver and Victoria watersheds, and attempts to log in the Nelson watershed, would all serve as examples “to the myriad of other watersheds that will require forest management development.” It was even suggested by industry and government foresters that communities should obtain their water from wells so that drinking watersheds could be logged without public complaints.



In the 1990s, some changes came through the sacrifices of citizens who were shocked to discover skeletons in many government closets and brought them to public attention. Some, in defending their water supplies from development, were arrested and jailed.

It took a court case, but logging ended in Victoria's watershed in 1994. In that same year, Nelson's water supply was protected through park status. And logging ended in the Greater Vancouver watersheds in 1999.

Across the international boundary, logging has ended in Seattle's Cedar River watershed, which the forest industry showcased to advocate logging in Washington, Oregon and BC domestic watersheds. Logging also ended in Portland's water supply, the Bull Run.

However, rural BC communities have no such protection and government foresters continue to turn a deaf ear to their concerns and a blind eye to current conditions. In 1998, the public referendum to end logging in two watersheds on the Sunshine Coast—Chapman Creek and Gray Creek—was simply ignored.

What has been the result of the last 50 years of changes to government policies and legislation that formerly protected our water-supply sources? The ruination of hundreds of our domestic watersheds, along with maintenance and watershed restoration costs. Millions of tax dollars spent on public committees, reports, task forces and investigations to justify logging in these watersheds. Additional costs to communities for health and water treatment facilities. Hundreds of thousands of hours spent by concerned British Columbians to raise issues and write letters, reports, and submissions to the government.

The Auditor General's 1999 report on drinking water, the government committee to review the Auditor General's report and the work done to prepare proposed legislation to protect drinking water all point to the need for fundamental changes. Professional foresters, upholding professional principles, should be leading the way.

[Will Koop, a Vancouver resident, researched and advocated the protection of the Greater Vancouver watersheds before going on to research the legislative and administrative history of logging in BC's domestic watersheds. He is presently the coordinator of the BC Tap Water Alliance (www.alternatives.com/bctwa).]