

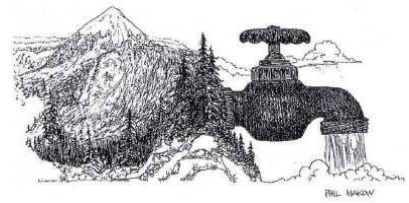
# B.C. Tap Water Alliance

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

## Supply Sources

Email – [info@bctwa.org](mailto:info@bctwa.org)

Website – [www.bctwa.org](http://www.bctwa.org)



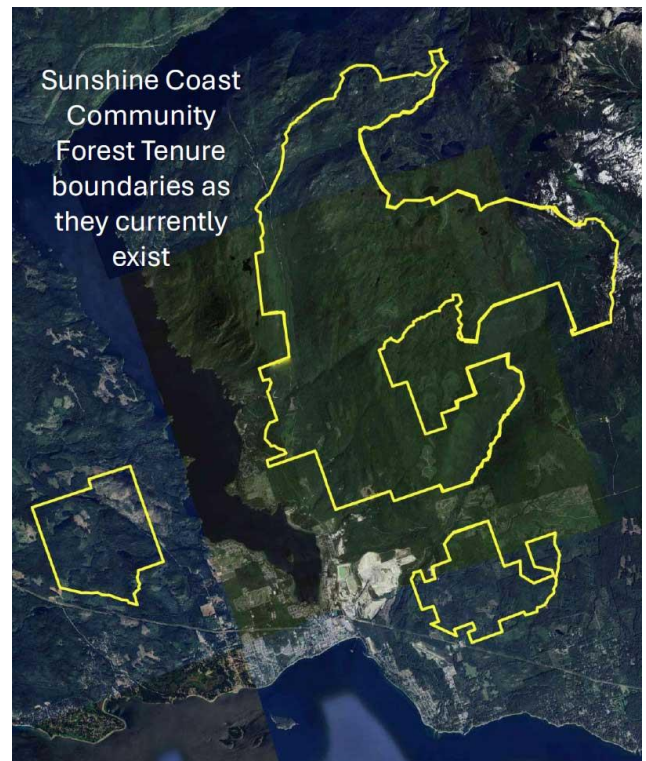
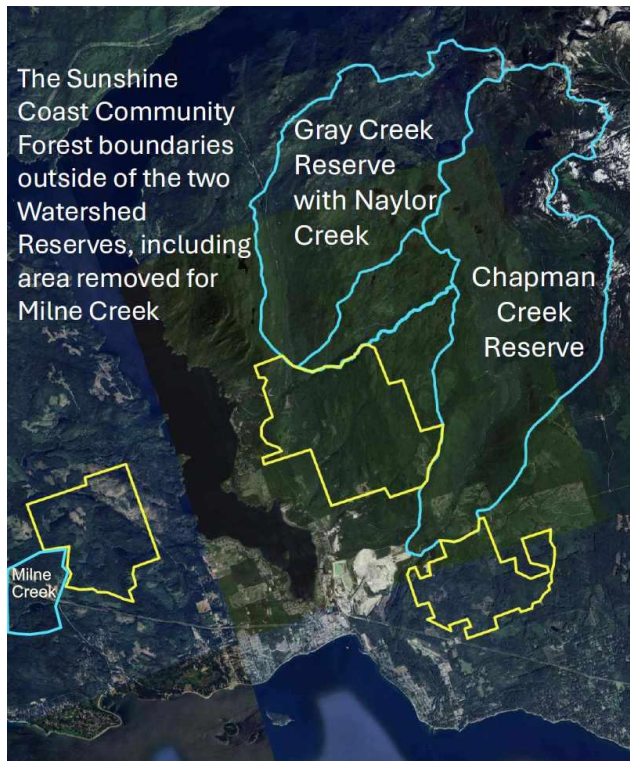
*For Immediate Release*

June 4, 2025

## Alliance Revisits BC Government Malfeasance in Sunshine Coast Community Forest License

At a March 27, 2025 public meeting in Sechelt, the BC Tap Water Alliance revisited the 20-year Sunshine Coast Community Forest (SCCF) controversy. The on-line power-point presentation, called [“Nothing Left: The Fictional Tenure and Inflated Logging Plans of the Sunshine Coast Community Forest”](#), was based on the Alliance’s 2008 report, [“The Community Forest Trojan Horse”](#), which catalogued the controversy.

As apparent in the presentation, [and on a recent \(May 27, 2025\) map](#) published by [Elphinstone Logging Focus](#), the inclusion of three community watersheds which make up about 60 percent of SCCF’s three operational tenure areas (~10,700 hectares total) has enabled an inflated and unsustainable rate of logging on the now depleted 40 percent of the tenure not within the community watersheds. The community watersheds are next, prompting this review.



Starting in the mid-1980s the BC government essentially hid the existence of Community Watershed Reserves from the public during provincial timber supply reviews in order to include them in the Timber Harvesting Land Base. This extensive coverup was discovered in 1991-1992 prompting provincial government administrators to deceive local authorities and the public by claiming that Community Watershed Map Reserves were “red flags”, not watersheds explicitly set aside to protect community water supplies, as indicated in clearly worded *Land Act* policies to the contrary.

By “direct awarding” the Sunshine Coast Community Forest (SCCF) probationary licence in 2006, the Minister of Forests continued to ignore the existing Section 16 *Land Act* Watershed Map Reserve status of three provincial Community Watersheds and illegally included portions of them in the new community forest tenure. The inclusions of Chapman, Gray and Milne Creeks in the community forest tenure also ignored, thereby disrespecting, the results of the May 1998 Sunshine Coast Regional District public referendum about community watershed governance and the subsequent SCRD and Shíshálh Nation Accord, which opposes logging in the Chapman and Gray Creeks Community Watersheds.

Not admitting the obvious until 2009, the Gordon Campbell Liberal government conspired with Lands and Forest administrators to quietly “legalize” government’s illegal dispositions in the watershed reserves [by secretly demoting not only these three but dozens of other watershed reserves in Southwest BC from Section 16 to Section 17](#). Section 17 empowers the Minister to decide if certain other uses are “compatible” with the purpose for which the community watershed reserves were designated. The change to Section 17 was done without consultation of the communities intended to benefit from “protected” community water sources and the appearance to be retroactive legalization of the illegal granting of logging tenures within the *Land Act* “community watershed reserves” since the 1980’s. Successive BC government administrations ignored the mounting evidence and conspired with Ministry of Forests staff to retain the watershed reserves in the Provincial “Timber Harvesting Land Base”, turning a blind eye to laws intended to “protect” critical community water sources and the public they supply.

Will Koop, Alliance Coordinator, stressed that, “The letting of the SCCF licence in 2006, which included parts of three watershed map reserves, was illegal. Section 17 may have sidestepped past “illegality”, but the Minister is left defending the opinion that logging and road building are compatible with community water supply, when there is no evidence to support that, and as recent long-term studies show conclusive evidence against it.”

“In the nearly 20 years since the SCCF licence was awarded, BC has witnessed climate change induced drought conditions lengthen and intensify. Recently completed long-term studies have reconfirmed that mature forests use less water than second and third growth forests, while simultaneously retaining more water on the landscape over longer periods for slow release into the environment. Watersheds with mature forests consistently produce more, higher quality water than younger forests.”

“Known and reflected in BC’s legislation for over 100 years, logging and road building are not compatible uses in watersheds where community water supply is a primary consideration. Taxpayers pay the inevitable, resulting costs. Protected community watershed status should be reinstated over all of BC’s community watersheds by re-designating them under Section 16 of the *Land Act* and “withdrawing” them from the Timber Harvesting Land Base.”

-----

**Cc:** Shíshálh Nation / Sunshine Coast Regional District / District of Sechelt / Town of Gibsons / Union of B.C. Municipalities / Elphinstone Logging Focus / Sunshine Coast Conservation Association / Western Canada Wilderness Committee / West Coast Environmental Law Association / Ravi Parmar, BC Forests Minister / Makenzie Leine, BC Deputy Forests Minister / Mark Sloan, Sunshine Coast District Forests Manager, Powell River / Randene Neill, Sunshine Coast MLA and Minister of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship / Lori Halls, BC Deputy Minister of Land, Water, and Resource Stewardship / B.C. Auditor General / B.C. Civil Liberties Association / Sunshine Coast Reporter / Vancouver Sun / CBC News, Vancouver.